

**THE *DE GRAECORUM HODIE QUORUNDAM OPINATIONIBUS*
OF LEO ALLATIUS:
AN INTERPRETATION OF POPULAR RELIGION IN
SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY GREECE**

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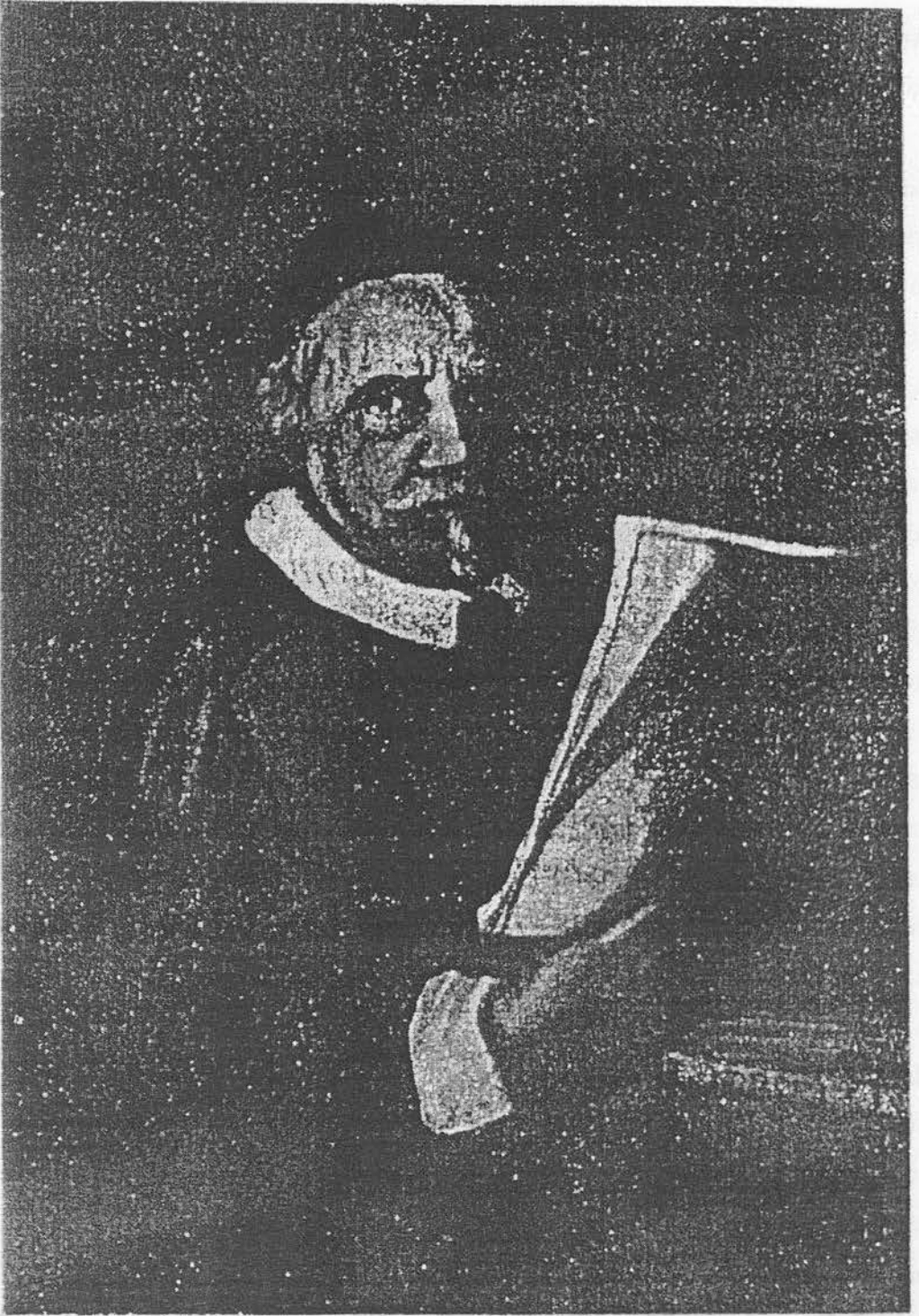


DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I declare that this thesis is my own work and was composed by me.

Karen Hartnup

October 2000



(fig. 1)

Leo Allatios (1587-1669)

Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of the *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinionibus* (1645), a letter written by the Greek Catholic Leo Allatios to his friend, the papal doctor Paulus Zacchias. It provides an assessment of his reliability as a source for popular religion in seventeenth-century Greece.

The text, which was written to an Italian doctor, is placed in its western context and the influence of Catholic western trends in the fields of antiquarianism, ecumenism and medicine on his interpretation and presentation of the material is considered in order to assess the reason for his interest in these practices and the depth of his knowledge of the subject matter. Each chapter considers his interpretation of a particular popular belief and assesses the belief in its own context and that of formal Orthodoxy in order to ascertain Allatios' understanding of it. The first section of the thesis examines Allatios' comments on the child stealing demon, the *gello*. The first chapter considers how the beliefs surrounding it relate to popular and Orthodox practice. This moves on to an examination of his comments on the relationship between this creature and baptism, assessing the extent to which he takes a western perspective on the matter. The third chapter once again concentrates on the *gello*, this time in relation to marriage, and asks why Allatios fails to consider one of the richest areas of popular practice. The second section deals with Allatios' comments on the *vrikolakas* and compares his understanding of the creature both with that presented in popular beliefs and that of the Orthodox church. The final section considers Allatios' attitude towards medicine in the text which was written to a western doctor: chapter seven notes how unction is made to play a positive role in a text mainly concerned with the superstitions of the Greeks and the extent to which this affects Allatios' treatment of the subject; chapter eight examines his scientific outlook and the influence of his Neoplatonism on the structure of the final section of the letter. Finally, the conclusion notes the influence of Allatios' western viewpoint with regard to his Catholicism, ecumenism and his scientific understanding of the world and stresses the relationship which exists between popular and formal Orthodoxy.

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Facsimilie reprint of the 1585 edition printed at London by Thomas
Dawson, p. 38.

Abbreviations

Albinus,
Handbook

ALBINUS, *The Handbook of Platonism: Alcinous*, translated with an introduction and commentary by John Dillon, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.

Alexandrian
Chronicle

ALEXANDRIAN CHRONICLE, *Chronicon Alexandrinum idemque astronomicum et ecclesiasticum, vulgo Siculum, seu Fasti Siculi ...* [Attributed to George of Pisidia.] Graecè, cum Latina interpretatione vulgatum opera & studio Matthaei Raderi, Monachii, ex formis A. Bergiae, 1615.

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Introduction

Leo Allatios was one of the most prolific scholars of the seventeenth century, yet there have been very few works dedicated to his writings. Although he was not the greatest scholar of the age, and was a better collector than interpreter of facts, his importance should not be underestimated. His career takes in many of the most important intellectual movements of the period. A passionate antiquarian, he moved in humanist circles. He was theologically trained and advised various Vatican congregations, including the Propaganda de Fide, through which he met ecclesiastical scholars such as Jacques Goar and Ioannes Morinus.¹ His medical training brought him into contact with some of the most important scientists and doctors of the age including Galileo and Paolo Zacchias, to whom *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinionibus* is addressed. Standing at the centre of ecclesiastical, humanistic and medical circles, he provides a unique insight into the interaction of their various ideas and concerns. His life and works reveal these influences.

Biography

Leo Allatios was born c.1587 in Chios town to Niccolas Allatzes and Sebaste Neurides.² Both parents were Greek, but though his father was from an Orthodox family it is unclear whether his mother was Orthodox or Catholic. Certainly her brother Michael Neurides became a Jesuit but we cannot tell whether he was born into a Catholic family or converted later in life.³ This gives rise to the much discussed problem of Allatios' own confessional status. Amantos in 1935 and more

¹ Philip Argenti, *The Religious Minorities of Chios; Jews and Roman Catholics*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 258.

² Stephanus Gradi, *Leonis Allatii Vita*, in Angelo Mai (ed.), *Novae patrum bibliothecae tomus primus[-decimus]*, Rome, typis s. Cong. Propagando chr. Nomini, vol. VI, 1853, pt 2, ch. 2, pp. v-vi. Allatios signed his name Leo Allatius in Latin, and Leone Allacci in Italian. There is some dispute over the exact date of his birth. He was born some time between 1586 and 1588. I have followed the date suggested by Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 234 n. 1-2.

³ Charles A. Frazee, 'Leo Allatios, A Greek Scholar of the Seventeenth Century', *Yearbook of Modern Greek Studies* 1 (1985), 64. Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 234 argues that both parents were Orthodox, but see his discussion pp. 234-5 n.2 where he concentrates on evidence for the paternal side of the family, and dismisses the evidence put forward for the Orthodoxy of Allatios' mother's family.

recently Papadopoulos have argued for his Orthodoxy.⁴ His private profession of faith, however, indicates where his loyalties lay, and it is most likely that he was baptised as an Orthodox and later converted to Catholicism. The difficulty in establishing the faith of Allatios and his family arises partly from the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholics on the island. Allatios himself notes that not only do the Orthodox and Latins frequently intermarry, but they also attend services indiscriminately in the different churches.⁵ In many Aegean islands, including Chios, the distinction between Catholic and Orthodox was not as significant to the inhabitants as it is today. This was the state of affairs in many of the other Aegean islands too. On Chios this situation only changed with the Venetian invasion of 1694, when the relations between the Orthodox and Catholics deteriorated sharply.⁶

Allatios attended the Catholic school on the island run by his uncle, Michael Neurides, where he displayed such aptitude that he was allowed to teach the younger boys.⁷ This school can probably be identified as the Jesuit establishment founded under Clement VII (1523-34) which was housed in the church of Saint Anthony.⁸ Neurides had been sent out to found the school in Chios after spending ten years in the Greek college at Rome.⁹ In 1596 Neurides was recalled to Rome and offered to take his nine-year-old nephew with him, promising to enrol him at the Greek college

⁴ I. Thomas Papadopoulos, 'Ο Λέων Αλλάτιος καὶ ἡ Χίος', *Χιακὰ Χρονικά* 20 (1989), 13; K.I. Amantos, 'Λέων Αλλάτιος', in *Ἀνατύπωσις ἐκ τοῦ εἰς μνήμην Σπ. Λάμπρου*, Athens, 1935, p. 556-7.

⁵ *De Ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua consensione, libri tres*, Farnborough: Greg International, 1970, cols. 979-80. Kallistos Ware, 'Orthodox and Catholics in the Seventeenth Century: Schism or Intercommunion', *Studies in Church History* 9 (1972), 263.

⁶ Philip P. Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Venetians (1694): Described in Contemporary Diplomatic Reports and Official Dispatches*, London: John Lane, 1935, pp. xc-xci.

⁷ Leo Allatios, *De templis Graecorum recentioribus*, Colonna, apud Iodocum Kalcovium et socios, 1645, ch. XIII, p. 148.

⁸ Philip Pandely Argenti, *Diplomatic Archive of Chios, 1577-1841*, 2 vols., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954, vol. 1. p. 16. Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. 13, p. 148; For the church see also, Charalambas Bouras, 'Η Ἀρχιτεκτονική τῶν Γενουάτικων Ἐκκλησιῶν τῆς Πόλεως Χίου', *Χιακὰ Χρονικά* 18 (1987), 14; Amantos, 'Λέων Αλλάτιος', p. 558.

⁹ Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 4, p. vii. J. Krajcar, 'The Greek College under the Jesuits for the First Time', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 31 (1965), 109-110.

at Rome. Allatios' parents agreed and uncle and nephew embarked on the long and difficult sea voyage to Messina.¹⁰

At nine, Allatios was still too young to enrol at the college, and spent two years in the care of a family at Messina, and then one in Naples, where he improved his Latin.¹¹ When he was thirteen he entered the Greek college at Rome, St Athanasius', which had been set up in 1576 by Gregory XIII to further the aims of the Propaganda de Fide. The Catholicising tendencies of the school were noted and many students, such as the future Patriarch Kyril Lukaris,¹² who wished to retain their faith, entered the University at Padua rather than the school at Rome.¹³ At one point, pupils of St Athanasius' were forced to take an oath that they would return to Greece and preach the Greek rite once they had finished the course.¹⁴ Allatios was one of the few who refused to promise this, declaring that he would worship in the rite that seemed best to him, and return home when he wished. Despite the trouble that this caused, he progressed well at school and graduated eleven years later, defending his thesis in philosophy and theology. Originally he had intended to return to his beloved homeland,¹⁵ but his earlier refusal to take the required oath suggests perhaps that a missionary's life had never appealed to him. The priesthood, however, did retain some attraction, as he remained unmarried so that he might at some future point take holy orders.¹⁶

¹⁰ Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 4, p. vii ; I. Thomas Papadopoulos, 'Ἰησουῖτες στὴ Χίο (1594-1773)', *Χιακὰ Χρονικά* 21 (1991), 48.

¹¹ Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 5, p. vii.

¹² Kyril, the patriarch with Protestant sympathies, had a troubled patriarchate, being deposed no less than six times during the period 1612 -1638. Following his final deposition, he was discovered strangled in a ditch.

¹³ Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 11, p. x. Steven Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity: A Study of the Patriarchate of Constantinople from the Eve of the Turkish Conquest to the Greek War of Independence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 261; Nikolas M. Stoupakis, *Γεώργιος Κορέσσιος (1570-1689/60). Ἡ ζωὴ, τὸ ἔργο τοῦ καὶ οἱ πνευματικοὶ ἀγῶνες τῆς ἐποχῆς του*, Ph. D. Thesis, University of Athens, 1992. p. 42.

¹⁴ Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', 66; Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 238.

¹⁵ Allatios was very proud of his island and wrote a treatise to prove that it was the birth place of Homer: *De patria Homeri*, Lugduni, Sumptibus L. Durand, 1640. On his intention to return after graduating from the college see Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 240.

¹⁶ Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', 73.

Following his graduation, rather than returning to Chios, Allatios joined Bernardo Giustiniani in Anglona. His biographer, Gradi,¹⁷ states that he was the vicar general, but according to Frazee it was more likely that he was Giustiniani's minister.¹⁸ He remained in this job for three years, but found it unfulfilling. In 1615 he was offered the opportunity to return to Chios as a vicar general of Bishop Marco Giustiniani Massone, a fellow Chian, who, like Allatios, favoured the Roman rite. Sadly, on reaching Smyrna, Allatios learned of the death of his father and his short stay on Chios was not to be an enjoyable one.¹⁹ Not only was it overshadowed by his father's death, but it was also marred by violent disputes within the Catholic community.²⁰

There were social and confessional tensions amongst the Catholics on Chios. The Mahonesi were descendants of the Genoese rulers of the island, and, following the Turkish conquest in 1566, they continued to exert their authority through the various institutions allowed to Chios under the Privileges granted to the island by the Sultan.²¹ Their highhandedness often resulted in friction between them and the *Borghesi* party, which was made up by the remaining Catholic citizens. When the Turks seized the church of the Catholic Fraternity of the *Disciplinati*, leaving the community without a place of worship, the bishop allocated the church of Hagios Georgios Serapios to them, although it was a Greek church for which the Mahonesi had the right of presentation. This issue was further complicated by the fact that Bishop Giustiniani came from a Mahonesi family, and therefore was not viewed as an impartial judge. The allotment of the church to the *Disciplinati* rested on the

¹⁷ Cerbu argues that the authorship of Gradi disguises Allatios' heavy involvement in the writing of the text, and suggests that this and the other works concerning Allatios' life (the *Ricordi* and *Elogium*) should instead be considered as autobiography. Thomas Cerbu, *Leone Allacci 1587-1669. The Fortunes of an Early Byzantinist*, Ph. D. Thesis, Harvard University, 1986, p. 29. This was first discussed in Cyril Korolevskij, 'Les premiers temps de l'histoire du College Grec de Rome', *Stoudion* 3 (1926), 87-88.

¹⁸ Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 11, p. x. Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', 66; Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 240-241.

¹⁹ Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 16, p. xii.

²⁰ The discussion below follows Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 21-26, pp. xiv-xvii.

²¹ For the documents relating to the privileges see Philip P. Argenti, *Chios Vineta: or, The Occupation of Chios by the Turks (1566) and their Administration of the Island (1566-1912): Described in Contemporary Diplomatic Reports and Official Dispatches*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941, p. 208-227, esp. pp. 219-221; and his commentary on this pp. clxxiii, clxxix-clxxxiii.

condition that the heads of the fraternity would from now on be drawn from the Mahonesi alone.²²

The Orthodox priest who administered the church was furious at this confiscation, but unable to prevent it. This event reveals both the power of the Catholic bishop in such circumstances, and the disadvantage at which the Orthodox could find themselves.²³ However, during this period the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholic churches was generally good. Allatios reports that they shared feast days and that Latin Bishop Massone even celebrated the liturgy at the altar of the Orthodox monastery, Nea Moni.²⁴ Indeed, there are reports of services where the Catholic bishop performed the liturgy in Orthodox churches, aided by Orthodox attendants.

The most serious problems which arose from this re-allotment came not from the Orthodox community, but out of the tensions between the different Catholic factions. The bishop's own *Mahonesi* background threw suspicion of favouritism on this decision. The *Borghesi* refused to give up their claims and withheld the property of the Fraternity in spite of the threat of excommunication issued by the bishop. Even though the Fraternity was a Dominican concern, the Jesuits intervened at this point and used their autonomous tribunal to excommunicate the *Mahonesi* leader in retaliation.²⁵

This independence of the missionary orders that resisted the authority of the bishop also caused problems for Allatios and Bishop Massone. Not only did the Jesuits have independent tribunals, but they and the other citizens had the right to appeal to Rome against the decision of the bishop. This made it extremely difficult for them to solve the local disputes within the Catholic church. This is illustrated by their

²² Argenti, *Minorities*, pp. 242-243

²³ Argenti, *Diplomatic Archive*, pp. 836-8.

²⁴ Allatios, *De consens.*, 3.9, cols. 1062-90. Charles A. Frazee, 'The *De Ecclesiae* of Leon Allatios - A Church History of the Seventeenth Century', *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 29 (1984), 61.

²⁵ Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 246.

intervention in a long running dispute between Franciscan Observants and the Jesuits over a legacy, which had been left to first the former and then the latter order. Schiattino, who was supported by the Jesuit party, was called before Allatios. Allatios was anxious to bring the issue to a close but unfortunately the discussion did not go well and ended in the excommunication of Schiattino. Again, the Jesuits retaliated, citing Allatios and the bishop before the court.²⁶

An appeal to Rome upheld the Jesuit position, forcing Massone and Allatios to defend themselves at the Congregation for Regulars.²⁷ Having spent less than a year in Chios, Allatios returned to Rome with his bishop to make their case, which they finally won in 1616. Although Massone returned to his position, the unpleasant atmosphere had persuaded Allatios against pursuing an ecclesiastical career in his homeland. He never again returned to Chios.²⁸

This perhaps was not Allatios' intention when he returned to Rome, where he took up medical studies while the case was being heard.²⁹ According to one source he intended to use his skills as a physician to aid better his fellow countrymen.³⁰ However, once he had completed his degree he decided to remain in Italy.³¹ He carried out his studies under Iulio Cesare Lagalla at Sapienza in Rome and graduated in record time six months later, gaining a certificate which allowed him to teach as well as to practice.³² In the event he did neither, growing disillusioned with medical practice. He did, however, remain in contact with many from the medical circle.

²⁶ Ibid, pp. 243-244.

²⁷ Gradi, *Vita*, chs. 24-25, pp. xvi-xvii. Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 251.

²⁸ I. Thomas Papadopoulos, 'Οικογενιακά τοῦ Λεόντος Αλλάτιου', *Χιακὰ Χρονικά* 18 (1987), 20. Although Allatios continued to correspond with his friends on Chios, he lost touch with his mother after she remarried. The above article reproduces a letter of Allatios' mother in which she remonstrates with her son for this, p. 23ff.

²⁹ Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 27, p. xvii.

³⁰ Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', 66.

³¹ Papadopoulos, 'Οικογενιακά', 19, n. 1. Papadopoulos, 'Λέων Αλλάτιος', 19.

³² The text of the medical degree is reproduced in Argenti, *Minorities*, pp. 447-450.

Instead of continuing with medicine, in 1618 he was given a position as a scriptor at the Vatican library to arrange the manuscript collection of the Greek codices.³³ This appointment followed the decision by Paul V (1605-21) to separate out the manuscript archives as a whole. Allatios was employed in cataloguing the collection.³⁴ At this time he was also given a position at the Greek college as professor of rhetoric by Cardinal Benedetto Giustiniani, his former teacher.³⁵ He did not remain there long as he fell out with Kariophyllas (1556-1633), bishop of Crete and a fellow teacher. By leaving the post Allatios also caused a rift between himself and Maffeo Barberini, Protector of the College. This he was later to regret.³⁶

What seemed like Allatios' great opportunity came in 1621-2. In return for the papal contributions to the Catholic league in Germany, Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, resolved to send the Palatine Library to the Vatican.³⁷ On the recommendations of Nicola Alemanni, his former teacher and curator of the Vatican Library, and Cardinal Scipio Cobellucci, Prefect of the Library, Allatios was preferred to more senior scriptors.³⁸ He set out in 1622 to begin the mammoth task of supervising the packing and transportation of the books. In return for his labours he was promised a canonry, but unfortunately Gregory XV (1621-23), who had commissioned the move, died some months before Allatios' return, and Allatios' adversary Maffeo Barberini was appointed Pope Urban VIII in 1623.³⁹ Not only did Allatios fail to receive due reward, but this job nearly brought the wrath of the papacy upon him. The scriptors Gaspar Schoppe and William Seton, slighted by his appointment, seized their chance to even the score and claimed that Allatios had stolen some of the texts.⁴⁰ Although

³³ Jean Bignami-Odier, José Ruyschaert, *La Bibliothèque Vaticane de Sixte IV à Pie XI: recherches sur l'histoire des collections de manuscrits*. Studi e testi 272. Vatican: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1973, p. 105.

³⁴ Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 31, p. xx.

³⁵ Ibid, ch. 32, p. xx.

³⁶ Ibid, ch. 34, pp. xxi-xxii.

³⁷ Ibid, ch. 35, p. xxii. For further information on this task see J. Curzio Mazzi, *Leone Allacci e la Palatina di Heidelberg*, Bologna: Garagnani, 1893; Giovanni Beltrani, 'Relazioni sul trasporto della Biblioteca Palatina da Heidelberg a Roma, scritta da Leone Allaccii ed ora per la prima volta pubblicata', *Heidelberger Jahrbücher der Literatur* 31-32 (1872), 5-31.

³⁸ Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 36, p. xxxii.

³⁹ Ibid, ch. 42, p. xxvi.

⁴⁰ Ibid, ch. 43, p. xxvi.

some books were found to be missing, their whereabouts could all be accounted for, and Allatios eventually managed to clear his name.⁴¹

Despite these problems, Allatios, '*a young and brilliant scriptor*' continued his work at the Vatican library, where he was to make an enormous contribution to the cataloguing and reorganisation of manuscripts under the custodianship of Felice Contelori, head scriptor (1626-30).⁴² Allatios was extremely meticulous and his work compares favourably to that of Contelori himself.⁴³ Although the job required Allatios to reassess the earlier catalogue, the greatest part of his time was spent integrating other libraries and individual manuscripts into the Vatican collection: notably manuscripts from the Greek College, the Lollianini collection and of course, after 1622, the Palatine. Allatios' work was interrupted in 1632, when Orazio Giustiniani succeeded to the post of head scriptor (1630-1640), and, according to Gradi, this man's jealousy led him to restrict Allatios to the duties of copyist.⁴⁴ Allatios' work on the catalogue resumed in 1640 after the appointment of Annibale Albani.⁴⁵ In 1655, when Allatios was finally given the post of deputy curator, the '*reign of Allatios*' began.⁴⁶ Finally, in 1661 he achieved the position of head curator, which he held until his death eight years later. During these years he continued his cataloguing work and the fruit of his labours was a three volume inventory of the Greek manuscripts of the Vatican, completed and bound during the papacy of Clement IX (1667-1669).⁴⁷

Employment as a scriptor gave Allatios access to the works of the Vatican library, a factor which proved essential for the development of his literary career. It was under the patronage of the bishop, later cardinal, Lelio Biscia, that Allatios' literary talents

⁴¹ Ibid, ch. 45, p. xxvii. This text does not take us much further on in Allatios' life, breaking off abruptly shortly after discussing Contelori's appointment as director of the archive in 1626.

⁴² Bignami, *Bibliothèque Vaticane*, p. 110; Paul Canart, *Les Vaticani Graeci 1487-1962: notes et documents pour l'histoire d'un fonds de manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Vaticane*. Studi e Testi 284. Vatican: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1979, p. 6.

⁴³ Canart, *Vaticani Graeci*, pp. 3-4, 7.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 12.

⁴⁵ Bignami, *Bibliothèque Vaticane*, p. 112.

⁴⁶ Canart, *Vaticani Graeci*, p. 23.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 13 n. 62.

began to receive recognition. Although he was passed over for promotion to head scriptor of the Vatican in 1632 and 1636, Biscia recognised his potential and invited him to become curator of his own excellent library, and, in addition, gave him a position as his personal theologian.⁴⁸ It was for Biscia that Allatios wrote his first work concerned with the Greek church.⁴⁹ Allatios remained under Biscia's wing until the cardinal died in 1635 and then became curator to the Barberini library. This brought him into the circle of Francesco Barberini, the most influential cardinal in Rome. The patronage of Biscia and Barberini not only brought with it much needed financial remuneration, and access to books, but also introduced Allatios to a wide range of humanists including Goar, Morinus and Naudé.

Throughout his career Allatios wrote and published prolifically.⁵⁰ There are many volumes of his work in print, but the majority of his letters remain uncatalogued in the Vatican. His first passion was for antiquarian studies. His writing and rewriting of the *Summika*, originally titled *Varia Antiqua*, between 1630 and 1650 reveals the importance he placed on this kind of work.⁵¹ He virulently attacked those whom he considered poor practitioners and aimed in his own work to surpass that of the great sixteenth-century antiquarian, Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609).⁵²

His friends increasingly encouraged him to turn his attention to a subject on which he had special expertise: the Orthodox church. His ecclesiastical works were driven by his ecumenicism, most clearly demonstrated in his most important composition *De*

⁴⁸ Gradi, *Vita*, ch. 46, p. xxvii.

⁴⁹ *De aetate et interstitiis in collatione ordinum etiam apud Graecos servandis*, Rome, excudebat Mascardus, 1638.

⁵⁰ For Allatios' works see Fernand Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, vol. 1.2, cols. 1220-1226, sv 'Allatius'; Carmela Jacono, *Bibliografia di Leone Allacci (1588-1669)*, Palermo: Palermo Presso L'Accademia, 1962.

⁵¹ See his *Summika, sive Opusculorum, Graecorum et Latinorum, vetustiorum ac recentiorum, libri duo*, Coloniae Agrippinae apud Iodocum Kalcovium, 1653; On this work see Cerbu, *Leone Allacci*, p. 160.

⁵² Cerbu, *Leone Allacci*, pp. 161-162. Allatios' attack on Scaliger's *Thesaurus Tempus* is the subject of *De Mensura temporum graecorum et praecipue Graecorum*, 1645. See also *Animadversiones in antiquitatum Etruscarum Fragmenta ab Inghirami edito*, Paris, by S. Cramoisy, 1640, which criticises the antiquarian Curzio Inghirami.

ecclesiae consensione where he presents the historical relationship between the churches through extensive quotations from Byzantine texts to argue that in essence there was no schism between East and West, and the true Orthodox was in communion with Catholics. His ecumenical position was probably influenced by his childhood experiences on Chios.

A work such as the *De ecclesiae consensione* was greatly needed, for the West was ignorant of the development and common history of eastern and western rites. Roman ecclesiastics were highly suspicious of anything which differed from the Roman norm. Even churchmen, like Santoro, famous for his interest in eastern Christianity, were wary of divergent rites.⁵³ For Santoro the solution to the dangerous variations was to impose the Roman rite on the dissidents. This attitude was extremely problematic at the Greek college, for at the same time as asserting the exclusive position of the Roman doctrines and rites, the teachers at the college were anxious to ensure that the future missionaries should be accepted by the Orthodox. Their suspicion of Orthodox rites led to the peculiar situation that existed during Allatios' time at the college. While the Greek calendar and rite were stressed, students were forbidden by the rector Nanni from taking communion after the Greek fashion.⁵⁴ This underlying distrust of all things Greek made it difficult to train priests that would be acceptable to the Orthodox church, already suspicious of Catholic ambitions. Nanni, again taking the conservative position, refused to allow Greek ordinations. Others, notably Possevino, an expert in oriental problems and one time secretary of the Society of Jesus, recognised that no priest ordained by Latin or Latinophile Greeks would be accepted.⁵⁵ Great pains had to be taken to deal with this issue. Possevino suggested that the priest first be ordained by a Latin, and then sent to a friendly Orthodox priest in Greece who would provide the credentials to satisfy the Orthodox.

If ecumenicism was to progress, the Catholics had to be persuaded of the common

⁵³ J. Krajcar 'Cardinal Santoro and the Christian East', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 177 (1966), 10.

⁵⁴ Krajcar, 'Greek College', 98.

⁵⁵ Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', 101-102.

root of their rites. Allatios' efforts in this sphere were not limited to scholarly debates; he was also actively involved in church business. He was a member of the *Accademia Basiliana* set up by cardinal Francesco Barberini in 1631, a group which sought to reconcile the two churches.⁵⁶ In addition he was often consulted by the Congregations of the Holy Office, and the Propaganda de Fide, and also by the Index, the Liturgy and the Deputati.⁵⁷ Although he was primarily interested in the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholic churches, his approach to other churches on the matter of rites was consistent with that described above. On the vote over the Chinese rite, he was one of those who voted for its retention.⁵⁸

Allatios made a great contribution to the ecumenical cause when in 1639 the subject of the legitimacy of the Greek rite was brought up again, this time by the head scriptor of the library, Orazio Giustiniani, who proposed that all Greek liturgical rites at variance with the Latin formula be banned. Allatios argued that this question had been settled at the council of Florence. To consider banning the rite was an insult to Chrysostom and Basil who composed the Liturgies, and to the early church, including that of Rome. Moreover, to reject the Greek formulae was to jeopardise the faith, and called the episcopal succession into doubt, for the bishops of the early church had been ordained according to the Greek rite.⁵⁹ This once again revealed the ignorance in the West of the history of the Orthodox church and its relationship with the early Christian churches. Allatios' work *De libris ecclesiasticis Graecorum, dissertationes duae*, which details the liturgical books of the Orthodox church, attempted to counter this lack of knowledge and bring about a more enlightened response to the Orthodox church.

Allatios' medical studies do not appear to have greatly influenced the body of his

⁵⁶ Ibid, 70. See also Émile Legrand, *Bibliographie hellénique, ou, Description raisonnée des ouvrages publiés par des Grecs au 17^e siècle*, Paris: A. Picard et fils, 1894-96; J. Maisonneuve, 1903, pp. 125-130, where he reproduces the *Fasti Academiae Basilianae* written by Joseph Carpano, a member of the group. This was originally printed in Carpano's *In Romana universitate iuris civilis in prima ordinaria sede vespertina professoris emeriti*, Rome, typis Ignatii de Lazaris, 1682.

⁵⁷ Argenti, *Minorities*, p. 258; Cerbu, *Leone Allacci*, p. 46.

⁵⁸ Cerbu, *Leone Allacci*, p. 61 n. 93.

⁵⁹ Frazee, 'Greek Scholar', p. 71; Cerbu, *Leone Allacci*, p. 139 n. 110.

published works. However, it was out of this milieu that his first work arose: a treatise on the astronomical interests of Lagalla, his medical professor.⁶⁰ Later his ties with medical groups weakened as his ecclesiastical work progressed. The extent to which the medical, humanist and ecclesiastical circles were separate however can easily be overestimated. It was, after all, Lagalla who introduced Allatios to Biscia.⁶¹ Unfortunately, Allatios' vast network of correspondents still remains hidden. When he died in 1669, still holding the post of head curator, his books and correspondence passed to the Greek College.⁶² They are now held by the Vallicelliana library in Rome and are yet to be catalogued. Until this daunting task has been completed, the extent to which his ecumenical, antiquarian and medical circles interacted and provided him with information, introductions and manuscripts will remain unknown.

The Text

The importance of the *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinionibus*

De opinionibus is not one of Allatios' major works, nor, at first sight, does it appear to deal with the main themes of the age. It is a light-hearted letter addressed to the eminent doctor, Paolo Zacchias, which focuses on the customs and beliefs of the Greeks of Allatios' own day. In this text Allatios does not discuss the weighty issues of the historical development of dogma and doctrine as in the *De ecclesiae consensione*, but instead concentrates on the practices and beliefs of the common people.⁶³ Nevertheless, the *De opinionibus* has been widely read by scholars ancient and modern and is highly valued as a source for popular customs of medieval and early modern Greece.⁶⁴ On the strength of this letter one author praises the

⁶⁰ *Iulii Caesaris Lagallae de caelo animato disputatio*, Rome, typis Voegelianis, 1622.

⁶¹ Cerbu, *Leone Allacci*, p. 131.

⁶² Allatios' will is reprinted in Legrand, *Bibliographie*, vol. 3, pp. 447-459.

⁶³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch., XX, p. 162.

⁶⁴ For examples of older writers who make use of Allatios see Paul Rycart, *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches*, London: printed for John Starkey 1679, p. 271 ff.; Thomas Smith, *An Account of the Greek Church as to its Doctrine and Rites of Worship: with Several Historical Remarks Interspersed Relating there unto*, London: printed by Miles Flesher for Richard Davies, 1680, pp. 183-187. For modern authors see for example, Philip Argenti and H. J. R. Rose *The Folklore of Chios*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1949, vol. 1, p. 7; John Cuthbert Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910, p. 364: 'The first of the writers of the seventeenth century whose accounts

'famous and erudite' Leo Allatios as 'in many ways the most important of the seventeenth-century writers on Greek customs and traditions.'⁶⁵

In spite of Allatios' considerable influence, or perhaps because of it, historians have always taken the text at face value. There has been no consideration of the source as a whole, or critical evaluation of the evidence it provides in the context of its own time. How far did Allatios' understanding of popular belief arise from his own experience and how far was it gained through studying texts? To what extent can his sources be taken to reflect popular belief of his own time? Scholars have mined this source extensively for evidence but have never stopped to consider its limitations, the accuracy of the information it contains, or its suitability for their purposes. In particular it has often been assumed that it represents popular beliefs in Chios. Philip Argenti, the historian of Chios states '*Allatios was himself a Chian and therefore unless the contrary is indicated, it is usually safe to suppose that when he speaks of Greek customs he at least includes his fellow islanders.*'⁶⁶ This statement has not been based on a detailed assessment of the text: Argenti considers neither the extent to which Allatios relies on manuscript sources, rather than personal experience, for his discussions of popular religion, nor the relatively short period of time that he spent on Chios. Despite this, more recent authors have followed his lead. On the strength of Argenti's assumption, Richard Greenfield remarks that an exorcism contained in Allatios' text possibly originated in Chios.⁶⁷

deserve attention is one to whose treatise on various Greek superstitions reference has already been made, Leo Allatios.'; Montague Summers, *The Vampire in Europe*, New Hyde Park, N.Y.: University Books, [1962], p. 228.

⁶⁵ Summers, *Europe*, p. 228.

⁶⁶ Argenti, *Folklore*, vol 1, p.7. See Summers, *Europe*, p. 276 n. 28. '*Allatios was born on Chios in 1586 and his observations were chiefly made on, as his information is generally derived from, his native island.*' He assumes that his information comes from Chios before approaching the text. It is difficult to sustain the view that all the information relates directly to Chios given the large percentage of manuscript material he uses, in contrast to the small, but very useful snippets of personal experience he relates. Argenti and Summers argue that because he came from Chios and his experience of popular religion came from there too, that all his source material must relate to his home island. However, the majority of the source material is textual, and therefore cannot necessarily be taken as representative of Chios, nor, it must be noted, does Allatios ever claim to be discussing the beliefs of Chios alone.

⁶⁷ Richard P. H. Greenfield, 'St Sissinios, the Archangel Michael and the Female Demon Gylou: The Typology of the Greek Literary Stories', *Byzantina* 151 (1989), 93, n. 16.

The *De opinationibus* has never been thoroughly investigated, nor the beliefs and practices described there fully explained. This is clearly illustrated by the approach of authors to a particular passage in Allatios' work. The folklorist, John Cuthbert Lawson was puzzled by the apparent contradiction in the text of a *nomokanon* which describes the church's approach to the *vrikolakas* or revenant. He writes '*after denying the reality of such things [i.e. vrikolakes] which exist in imagination (kata phantasia) only, the nomocanon with some inconsistency continues: "but know that when such remains be found..."*'⁶⁸ As Lawson has pointed out, the text both asserts the non-existence of the creature and recognises the experience of people who see something in the grave.⁶⁹ Although Lawson recognises the problem, he makes no attempt to investigate it. Even so, he has still gone a step further than other authors, who gloss over or ignore the issue altogether.⁷⁰ There is therefore a need for a thorough investigation focusing on Allatios' text and its contents.

The text must first be returned to the context of Allatios' life and work. We have seen above that these centre round three themes: antiquarianism, ecumenicism and medicine. The *De opinationibus*, written in 1645, stands at the intersection of the three. It is the only work of the period specifically directed towards Greek popular religion and at first sight it is easy to miss its importance, and the way it links into current intellectual interests and trends. Written to the eminent doctor Paolo Zacchias, the work blends the themes of scepticism and natural explanation, with an emphasis on the closeness between Orthodox and Catholic churches as well as bearing the fruit of his earlier antiquarian studies.

⁶⁸ Lawson, *Folklore*, p. 366.

⁶⁹ See discussion of this point in chapter 5, pp. 170-171 below.

⁷⁰ Summers, *Europe*, pp. 224-5 avoids the issue altogether. Argenti, *Folklore*, vol 1, p. 17, seems to address the point: '*The fact is that the church was in something of a quandary in this matter. Nothing in its doctrine forbade anyone to believe that the Devil might play all manner of unpleasant tricks to frighten and deceive mankind, and therefore that he might produce a phantom in the shape of some recently dead or even animate a dead body; but official theology, Eastern and Western alike, refused to allow that the dead man himself returned in bodily form to earth*'. This does not, however, resolve how the church could, on the one hand, claim the undecayed body was an illusion, and, on the other, provide the means to dispose of it.

Antiquarianism

Although apparent throughout the work, Allatios' antiquarian training is most obvious in his introduction. Antiquarians were not historians. They were devoted to discovering all aspects of the past but were concerned with smaller subjects, collecting information on particular topics, rather than applying it to larger historical problems. They usually avoided specifically political topics, focusing on areas left untouched by the ancient historians. Allatios' discussion of the 'opinions of the Greeks' therefore follows in the antiquarian tradition. However, rather than applying himself to affairs of the distant past, as was usual with antiquarian studies, he states that he will look at the Greeks 'today'. In his introduction he appears to reject the concentration on the distant past, criticising those who desired to gain a reputation for erudition through this kind of work. He argues that if we saw the results of future investigations into our own times '*by those who desire a reputation for erudition (eruditio)*' we would say '*not that they were foolish, but plainly stupid because they were recollecting things that were extremely tedious and far removed from the truth.*'⁷¹ The term erudition or the Latin word 'eruditio' confirms that Allatios is attacking the focus of the studies of antiquarians.

However, Allatios does not reject antiquarianism completely but rather advocates that the discipline shifts its focus to more recent times. This does not imply a complete rejection of antiquarianism. As discussed above, Allatios was passionately interested in studies of the past, and continued this kind of research throughout his life. Moreover, it is clear that the *De opinationibus* bears the fruit of his earlier antiquarian activity. One of Allatios' main sources for this text is the corpus of work on popular beliefs attributed to Michael Psellos.⁷² Allatios brought these texts to light in his earlier *De Psellis*, a typical antiquarian work where he distinguished between the works of six men bearing the same name (Michael Psellos). The *De opinationibus* relies on his previous antiquarian scholarship and when Allatios is

⁷¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 114.

⁷² For example, Paul Gautier (ed.), 'Pseudo-Psellos: Graecorum opiniones de daemonibus', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 46 (1988), 85-108; 'Διηγήμεναι περὶ Γελλοῦς' in D.J. O'Meara (ed.), *Michaeli Pselli. Philosophica Minora*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1989; vol. II: *Opuscula, Psychologica, Theologica, Daemonologica*, p. 164; 'Τὸ ἔστι Βαβουτζίκαριος', p. 63.

critical of antiquarians he refers to their choice of subject matter, rather than their methods, castigating those who turn their efforts to '*events more distant in time and those which have now long passed away*'.⁷³

Antiquarians traditionally concentrated on the very distant past, the period of classical Greece and Rome. In the seventeenth century the study of the distant past was attacked from two angles: historical Pyrrhonism,⁷⁴ and from the stand point of the debate between the ancients and moderns. Historical Pyrrhonists attacked the antiquarian assumption that the past could be retrieved through a critical analysis of the sources and claimed that this was impossible: rather they questioned '*what certainty can we have concerning events of long ago, since we are unsure and without agreement about events which happen in our own time and in front of our own eyes?*'.⁷⁵ Allatios' introduction echoes this concern with respect to the study of antiquity. He describes those who engage in this activity as approaching the past through a '*superficial conjecture and a distorting lens*'.⁷⁶ It is foolish, he argues, to study antiquity as we can gain no sure knowledge of the past as it truly was.⁷⁷ He does not, however, take to heart the second criticism: that even knowledge of our own times is uncertain. Rather, he argues that contemporary events are those about which our mind '*can make a certain rather than haphazard judgement because it perceives them with its own eyes*'.⁷⁸ Allatios stresses that it is the possibility of obtaining eyewitness accounts which makes the present a better period for research than the past.

He advises that we should study the present not only because we have certain knowledge of it, but also because a wider field of investigation is open to us. The

⁷³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 114.

⁷⁴ Pyrrhonism was the philosophy of Pyrrho of Elis (330 BC) which stated that the certainty of knowledge is unattainable.

⁷⁵ Charles de La Ruelle, *Succintz adversaires contre l'histoire et professeurs d'icelle*, Poitiers, 1574, p. 16 quoted in George Huppert, *The Idea of Perfect History: Historical Erudition and Historical Philosophy in Renaissance France*, London: University of Illinois Press, 1970, p. 165.

⁷⁶ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 115.

⁷⁷ Ibid, ch. I, p. 114.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

antiquarians studying the past, hampered by the great works of the ancient Greek and Latin historians, limited their studies to clarifying the texts and expanding on areas not approached by these writers - the '*trifles*' referred to by Allatios. History at this time was not viewed as a matter of pitting one opinion against another, but as a matter of absolute proof.⁷⁹ The history of the past had been written, and could not be surpassed. Indeed, Allatios claims that he chose to write on the opinions of the Greeks of his own day, rather than those of the past, because other authors, both ancient and contemporary, had written on the latter subject: '*An obstacle exists in the shape of the works of other famous writers, who have treated these things with great accuracy.*'⁸⁰ The present age offered much greater scope for contemporary writers whose talents were unhindered by great works set in stone.

Moreover, the present time was as worthy of study as the ancient period. Allatios writes that events of our time are '*in no way more despicable than those ancient ones*'.⁸¹ Indeed, he argues, we have a duty to study the present before it is condemned, '*wrapped in the shadows of silence to be forgotten*'.⁸² In this, he alludes to the battle between the ancients and moderns, a common theme in writings of this period. Although the works of Tacitus and Livy could not be matched for their own times, there was no reason why histories of a similar quality could not be written for the modern period; an argument often used to justify the writing of national histories of modern nations. Often the aim of such histories was to establish the independence of the modern nation in all aspects. This was not the case with Allatios, who was not writing a history of Greece, nor attempting to establish the independence of Christian Greece from the ancient period. He does, however, concur that history of the modern period is as worthy of attention as that of the ancients.⁸³

⁷⁹ Huppert, *History*, p. 172, insists that it was considered as absolute as Galileo's observations. It is very odd to juxtapose this with Pyrrhonism. Arnaldo Momigliano, 'Ancient History and the Antiquarians', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950), 291-292, argues that what was left out by ancient historians could be salvaged by modern antiquarians.

⁸⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 115.

⁸¹ Ibid, ch. I, p. 114.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Huppert, *History*, p. 20; Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law and History in the French Renaissance*, London: Columbia University Press, 1970, p. 288; Momigliano, 'Antiquarians', 291; and for the narrowing of the gap between antiquarians and historians in the seventeenth century on subjects other than the classical period, 293-4.

However, there was also a movement away from the position of the Renaissance scholars who had seen history as the '*source of all wisdom*'.⁸⁴ History for them had a practical value and could guide men's actions in politics. The sixteenth-century historian La Popelinière still worked within this tradition and for him history was '*the most certain philosophy in an uncertain world*'.⁸⁵ In the seventeenth century doubt was cast on the worth of historical studies. Descartes dismissed it altogether, claiming it recorded only local transient events and therefore could not aid mankind to understand and act in the present.⁸⁶ In the face of such criticism, the aim of the practice of history changed. Instead of directing actions in the present, the emphasis changed to the goal of discovering what had actually happened. Rather than to guide the present and help predict the future, it was employed to understand how the current state of affairs had developed.⁸⁷ The focus was no longer strictly on political events and interest extended to the totality of the culture, making customs, morals, virtues and vices appropriate areas of study.⁸⁸ This subject matter had an advantage over political events. For Allatios, as for other historians and antiquarians of the period, rather than being products of history and therefore subject to change, these were products of human nature. Unlike events caught in the flux of history, these remained as a permanent substratum, unaltered through time. They '*are always the same*'. Allatios continues '*the same thing returns often more intensely*'.⁸⁹ The tension between these two views of history, the cyclical and the constant, remains throughout his work.

⁸⁴ Kelley, *Foundations*, p. 9.

⁸⁵ Huppert, *History*, p. 165.

⁸⁶ R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, revised edition with lectures, 1926-1928, edited with an introduction by Jan van der Dussen, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 60; Edmund E. Jacobitti, *Revolutionary Humanism and Historicism in Modern Italy*, London: Yale University Press, 1981, p. 12.

⁸⁷ Huppert, *History*, p. 47; R.G. Collingwood, *History*, p. 66.

⁸⁸ Kelley, *Foundations*, p. 11; Huppert, *History*, p. 39.

⁸⁹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 114.

Ecumenicism

Allatios' antiquarianism colours his approach to the most important focus of his life and work - his ecumenicism. In the seventeenth century antiquarian studies focused increasingly on church matters. The skills of the antiquarians, who were often clerics, were directed towards the problems of the present day: the strife between Protestantism and Catholicism. They employed their expertise to investigate the traditions of the church with polemical intent, that is, to demonstrate that their church followed in the true tradition of Christianity as represented by the apostolic churches, and that the religion of their opponents was a 'false' one.⁹⁰ This directed attention to the 'ideal' of the early church, a community of believers who lived in harmony, without the strife which had somehow developed during the history of the church. The contrast between the apostolic church and the church of their own day led to an increasing realisation of the development of the church through history. To understand the problems of the day, they must be approached from a historical perspective.⁹¹

As we have seen above, this was Allatios' approach to the relationship between the Orthodox and Catholic churches. Before any hasty decisions were taken concerning the legitimacy of the Orthodox rites, the historical development of the two churches should be considered. In *De ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua consensione* Allatios argued for the common outlook of the Orthodox and Catholic churches, proving this by tracing their relationship and positions on doctrinal issues through the centuries. This investigation revealed the interdependence of the two churches during the early period to such an extent that to outlaw the Greek rite undermined the apostolic succession of the Catholic church.

Allatios' ecumenicism needs to be placed in the context of the Catholic church's continuing interest in union with the Orthodox church, and this in turn must be seen against the background of Catholic / Protestant strife. Gregory XIII had set up the

⁹⁰ Bruno Neveu, 'L'érudition ecclésiastique du XVII^e siècle et la nostalgie de l'antiquité chrétienne', *Studies in Church History* 17 (1981), 195-225, 196.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Greek college in Rome in 1576 in order to aid the process of unification. The interest in the East continued and in 1639 Allatios was one of the many scholars called to Rome by Urban VIII to discuss the doctrinal positions of Catholicism and Orthodoxy with a view to the question of Union. The missionaries in the East co-ordinated by the Propaganda de Fide pursued the same interest in a more practical way. They were there not to convert the Muslims, an action which incurred the death penalty, but the Orthodox. Although the conversion of the laity was important, the conversion of the higher church officials had a greater impact. Several of the patriarchs of this period responded to the efforts of the missionaries, sending professions of faith to the papacy.⁹² The Jesuits in particular aimed to convert the church 'from the inside'.

The issue of church union was given an added dimension by the struggles between the western churches, Catholic and Protestant. Westerners turned to the East to gain support for their doctrinal positions. The French Ambassador, the Marquis de Nointel, collected declarations of faith from the Orthodox faithful and from these declared that the Orthodox and Catholic churches were at one on the issue of transubstantiation.⁹³ The Lutherans too approached the Orthodox church, writing to the Patriarch Jeremias II in order to get his support for their doctrines.⁹⁴ In addition, the Anglicans joined in the race. The English editor of a work on the Greek church by the Archbishop of Samos, Georgirenes, wrote '*Yet this cannot be deny'd them, but that they accord with us in many things wherein we differ from the Romish Church. I*

⁹² Catholicism was attractive to a number of patriarchs including Dionysios (1546-55), Metrophanes III (1565-1572; 1579-1580), Raphael II (1603-1607), Timothy II (1612-1620), and certain patriarchs even sent a submission to the papacy: Gregory IV (1623 Apr -1623 Jun), Kyril II (1633 Oct 4-1633 Oct 1; 1635 Mar -1636 Jun; 1638 Jun -1639 Jun), Athanasios III (1634 Feb-1634 Apr; 1652 last 3rd Jun [15 days]). See Runciman, *Great Church*, p. 230; 232.

⁹³ John Covel, *Some Account of the Present Greek Church, with Reflections on their Present Doctrine and Discipline; Particularly in the Eucharist, and the Rest of their Seven Pretended Sacraments*, Cambridge, printed for Cornelius Crownfield, printer to the university, 1722, p. iv.

⁹⁴ See Constantine Tsirpanlis, *The Historical and Ecumenical Significance of Jeremiah II's Correspondence with the Lutherans*, vol I, New York: Eastern Orthodox Press, 1982. On this point see also Dositheos, Patriarch of Jerusalem, *The Synod of Jerusalem Sometimes Called the Council of Bethlehem Holden under Dositheus, Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1672*, with notes by J. N.W.B. Robertson, London: Thomas Baker, 1899, p. 6. '*...there are now reaching us from France (how we would we had heard them!) rumblings. For the Calvinists that are there found, gratuitously indulging in wickedness, say that our Apostolic and Holy Church, the Eastern to wit, thinketh concerning God and the divine things as they themselves do wrongly think.*'

may add this more, that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the Greek Church doth not bear that conformity or similitude with the Romish Church, as the great Champions for Popery would affix upon them.⁹⁵ As these examples show, the focus of discussion was predominantly points of doctrine on which the two western churches differed.

It was not merely weight of numbers which impelled the West to approach Orthodoxy, but also the sense of its connection to the early church. Rycaut wrote that the Ancient Greek church had the blessing of the Apostles and produced so many Christians that Greek and Christian almost became synonymous.⁹⁶ Fleuriau, the Jesuit missionary also mentions the former glory of the Greek church.⁹⁷ The early church had a huge emotional pull for the writers and travellers of the period. Early travellers focused on the sites of the seven apostolic churches, and were awed by the treading on the same land as past saints.⁹⁸ The desire to recover the simplicity and unity of the early church was one of the themes running through the ecclesiastical writings of this period. The disunity and strife in the contemporary church made them long for the golden age of the earlier period.⁹⁹ It was widely believed that the former glory of the Greek church had now declined but despite this, the association with the church in the East brought with it the memory of earliest times and a deep connection to the apostolic past.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Joseph Georgirenes, *A Description of the Present State of Samos, Nicaria, Patmos and Mount Athos*, London: W. G., 1678, preface. In 1676 Georgirenes fled to England where he established himself and became an important figure in the Greek community. On his life and works see Legrand, *Bibliographie*, vol. 2, 1894, pp. 409-411, where Legrand reprints his work entitled *An account of his building of the Grecian Church in So-hoe fields and the disposal thereof by the Master of the Parish of St Martins in the Fields* from the British Library ms 816.m.9 (118).

⁹⁶ Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 10.

⁹⁷ Thomas Charles Fleuriau, *Estat des missions de Grèce, présenté à nosseigneurs les archevesques, evesques et deputez du clergé de France en l'année 1695*, Paris, chez Antoine Lambin et Simon Besnard, 1695, p. 3.

⁹⁸ George Wheler, *A Journey into Greece by George Wheler Esq. In the company of Dr Spon of Lyons*, London, printed for William Cademan, 1682.

⁹⁹ Neveu, 'érudition', 197.

¹⁰⁰ Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 10. Fleuriau, *missions*, p. 3 notes that since these times the Eastern church has changed and its earliest glory is now lost. The mantle has been passed to France and therefore it is just that the French return the glory of Christianity to its homeland. Although the contemporary eastern church has declined, its past glory plays a strong role in his thought.

Allatios' works reveal his involvement in the concerns of his age. The Catholic/Protestant polemic was the context in which Allatios' greatest work *De Consensione* had been written. The Protestants had appropriated Orthodox polemic for their own needs and Allatios' friend Nihusius¹⁰¹ asked him for some material with which to counter the charges. Each church looked to the East to support their cause. Allatios responded with a work which argued for the common outlook of the Orthodox and Catholic churches. In this he differed in his approach from other parties in the Catholic church who required a conversion, or even wished to suppress the Greek rite altogether.¹⁰² He and the others in the ecumenical group, the *Accademia Basiliana*, stressed the common origins and historical development of the churches. There were differences between the two, but these were of custom, and did not relate to fundamental points in doctrine. For Allatios, a true Orthodox was also Catholic. To satisfy his opponents he and his fellow ecumenicists produced many books on the subject.¹⁰³

This sympathetic approach to Orthodoxy affects Allatios' treatment of popular beliefs. At the same time as amusing and informing his readers, he must avoid giving fuel to those who believed that Orthodoxy had declined into superstition. This was a difficult task given the suspicion on the part of the Catholic church of popular belief. Often missionaries reported that the Greek religion was full of pagan practices, and the sources frequently speak of the superstitious nature of the Greeks. In the seventeenth century both scientists and churchmen were deeply interested in popular beliefs and practices. While the scientists searched in popular beliefs for elements of lost secret knowledge, the church treated them with great distrust. From the 1570's onwards, the emphasis of the Inquisition moved from crimes of diabolism to a prosecution of superstition.¹⁰⁴ Even though the diabolic element had been de-

¹⁰¹ Bertoldus Nihusius was a friend of Allatios and edited many of Allatios' works including the *De opin.* and the *De consens.*

¹⁰² See above p. 11 for Allatios debate with Orazio Giustiniani and Urban VIII on these matters.

¹⁰³ Aside from Allatios' output, works were produced by Petrus Arcudius, *De concordia ecclesiae occidentalis et orientalis*, Lutetiae Parisiorum, apud Cramoisy, 1626; Ioannes Morinus *Commentarius de sacris ecclesiae ordinationibus, secundum antiquos et recentiores, Latinos, Graecos, Syros, et Babylonios*, Paris: Sumptibus Gaspari Meturas, 1655.

¹⁰⁴ David Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992, p. 139.

emphasised, the church was suspicious and felt threatened by practices deviating from those it prescribed. A separation was made between the religious practices of the church and the superstitions of the laity, which, in the eyes of the church, lay outside the bounds of Christianity. The church orders, and particularly the Jesuits, were interested in reforming the practices of the laity, or 'Christianising', as they described it, understanding the local carnivals and festivals as relics of paganism.¹⁰⁵ They attempted to eradicate or replace the beliefs with more pious practices.

In contrast to this picture, Allatios' presentation of popular beliefs is strikingly sympathetic. His ecumenicism means that he approaches his material with a positive view of Orthodoxy and directs and shapes his presentation of the material in a way that will make it acceptable to a Catholic audience. Allatios finds it essential to mitigate the discussion of 'superstitions' with examples of practices which can be approved of. He is always careful to distinguish between the 'foolish' magical practices and those 'more pious' acts, which usually correspond to the Catholic sacramentals. The fact that he mentions these more acceptable practices is significant. At a time when Catholic authorities were hostile to the Greek rite it was vital to accentuate the acceptable practices, even in a work aiming to demystify popular superstitions.

Nevertheless, the impact of the Counter-Reformation church and the struggle between the Protestant and Catholic churches can be seen in the *De opinionibus*. Allatios focuses on popular beliefs in the areas surrounding church rituals - baptism, death, excommunication, holy unction - and on beliefs and practices surrounding the most important festivals in the church calendar, the areas of interaction between ecclesiastical and popular belief. This arises partly from the Tridentine focus on sacraments. The Protestant rejection of the majority of the sacraments had led to an increasing emphasis on their place within Catholicism.

¹⁰⁵ Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter Reformation*, London: Burns and Oats, 1977, p. 166; 177. Gentilcore, *Bishop*, p. 70; 216.

Allatios was not the only one who approached popular beliefs in the context of inter-church relations. The papacy at this time was very sensitive to popular beliefs and tales which had been drawn into the debate between the churches and became part of the rhetoric of polemic. The tale of Pope Joan was a matter of concern and the agreement between the Orthodox and Protestants on this matter was worrying. The Jesuit missionary, Father Richard, tells of how the Greeks laughed with the Protestants about this and threw scorn at the papacy.¹⁰⁶ Concerned about such reports, Pope Urban VIII (1623-44) asked Allatios to investigate the origins of the tale.¹⁰⁷ Popular practices were also drawn into the debate in order to characterise and criticise the various churches. Covell writes about the Orthodox, '*Thus the Greeks notwithstanding all that Allatios and most Latins and others scornfully say to the contrary, most zealously maintain their belief of their Vourcoloakas*'.¹⁰⁸ Popular beliefs could not be ignored by the ecumenicist. Covell suggests that elements within popular Orthodoxy had to be played down in order to make it more compatible with Catholicism. This accusation is also made by Father Simon: '*and it is to be feared that it may be objected to Allatius, that he hath softened a great many things in the Opinions of the Greeks, through a Design of reconciliation and to curry favour with Pope Urban VIII*'.¹⁰⁹ This probably refers to his better known work, the *De ecclesiae*, but the *De opinationibus*, published a year earlier, shares its ecumenical concerns.

While the *De ecclesiae* concentrates on drawing similarities between Greek and Orthodox doctrine, the *De opinationibus* draws comparisons between Orthodox and Catholic popular beliefs and practices. Both Orthodox and Catholics for example considered the water used to wash an altar to be powerful, and a tonic for invalids.¹¹⁰ Again, both Orthodox and Catholics share beliefs in the incorruptible nature of the

¹⁰⁶ Father François Richard, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable isle de l'Archipel, A Sant-Erini*, Paris, chez Sebastien Cramoisy, 1657, p. 151. See also Covell, *Church*, 1722, p. xi.

'We and the Greeks have a story of Pope Joan, the Latins a female patriarch.'

¹⁰⁷ *De Joanna papissa fabula commentatio*, Cologne, typis Iodoci Kalcovii & Sociorum, 1645.

¹⁰⁸ Covell, *Church*, p. xii.

¹⁰⁹ R. Simon, *The Critical History of the Religions and Customs of the Eastern Nations*, translated by A. Lovell, London, printed by J. Heptinstall for Henry Faithome, 1685, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VI, p. 124.

sacraments.¹¹¹ These beliefs are both of the ‘more pious’ variety, but Allatios sees identities between less acceptable Greek and western beliefs.¹¹² If the Orthodox laity is superstitious, it is no more blameworthy than its Latin neighbours. Moreover, these Orthodox popular beliefs were often more compatible with the dogma of the Catholic church than official Orthodoxy. They contain elements which could be used to draw Catholics and Orthodox closer together. The discussion of undissolved bodies in *De Purgatorio* revives the subject, and again reveals the interplay between ‘popular’ Orthodox and doctrinal Catholic beliefs in the work of Allatios.¹¹³

Medicine

If the influence of Allatios’ antiquarian studies is boldly stated in his introduction, the effect of his medical training is more subtle. The *De opinionibus* takes the form of a letter addressed to the eminent doctor Paolo Zacchias (1584-1659).¹¹⁴ Zacchias, a contemporary of Allatios was famous for his medical writings, both in his own times and today. He has been hailed as the father of public health, forensic medicine and clinical psychopathology, and his contribution to ideas of medical malpractice and mental deficiency has also been recognised.¹¹⁵ His most important work was the massive *Quaestiones medicolegales*, first published in part in 1623, which deals with everything from the treatment of wounds to mental illness.

In his choice of subject matter, ‘the opinions of the Greeks today’, Allatios claims to have been guided by the interests of his addressee. It may seem curious that such a topic would interest Zacchias, but in the seventeenth century the remit of the doctor

¹¹¹ Ibid, ch. XXIV, p. 171-173.

¹¹² Ibid, ch. II, p. 115; III, p. 116; IX, p. 138 compares the *gello* to the western witch.

¹¹³ *De utriusque Ecclesiae occidentalis atque orientalis perpetua in dogmate de Purgatorio consensione*, Rome apud Iosephum Lunam Maronitam, 1655, pp. 38-41.

¹¹⁴ Zacchias also appears in Leo Allatios, *Apes urbanae, sive De viris illustribus qui ab anno MDCCXXX per totum MDCXXXII Romae adfuerunt*, Hamburg, apud Christiani Liebezeit, 1711, pp. 302-306. Apart from this, the only other reference I have found to him in Allatios’ work comes in a letter of 1645 to Nihusius. Allatios closes with ‘Our Zacchias returns his greetings to you.’ See Allatios, *De consens.*, col. 1659.

¹¹⁵ Zdzislaw Traunfellner, ‘Paolo Zacchia - Vater der Gerichtlichen Medizin, 400 Jahre nach seiner Geburt’, *Zeitschrift für Rechtsmedizin* 94:2 (1985), 159-163; H.-J. Wagner, ‘Zur historischen Entwicklung des Begriffs „Ärztlicher Kunstfehler”’, *Zeitschrift für Rechtsmedizin* 86:4 (1981), 303-306; Paul F. Crane and Walter Federn, ‘Paulus Zacchias on Mental Deficiency and on Deafness’, *Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 46:1 (1970), 3-21.

encroached upon theological spheres. Doctors, with their knowledge of natural cause and effect, were considered the best qualified to judge whether an illness had a natural cause which they could treat, or a supernatural one which necessitated the attention of the church. This can be seen in Zacchias' discussion of impotence. He will not allow witchcraft as a cause unless all the usual symptoms of the illness are absent, and he lists the signs and possible causes at length.¹¹⁶ Doctors were also requested to investigate whether certain phenomena were truly miraculous or subject to normal physical laws, an extremely important function at a time when the church applied increasingly strict criteria in its assessment of miracles. Zacchias considers various cases of miracles, such as bodies which fail to decompose after death, prophecy, and elevation, much in vogue as a sign of sanctity during the Counter-Reformation period.¹¹⁷ A miracle is only a true miracle if it cannot be explained through natural causes. Even demons were bound by the laws of nature to a certain extent. They could not preserve a body except through art and prevention of natural processes. God, however, does not have to act to prevent natural processes, such as decay, by drying out a body, but manages to preserve the body entire with flesh intact.¹¹⁸ Similarly, true prophecy was not open to demons. They only seemed to tell the future through conjecture from the present situation or their knowledge of the past.¹¹⁹

There is a tension in Zacchias' work surrounding the position of demonic action: were demons subject to or outside natural causes? In some cases, as discussed above, they are bound by natural laws. In others, such as impotence, they can only be admitted as a cause when the natural explanation fails. With the advance of medicine it was becoming increasingly difficult to find a place for demons in the causation of disease but the large number of authorities who ascribed a role to them meant that this cause could not be ignored. In his discussions Zacchias considers witches and poisoners, but he writes, '*I, who have no faith at other times in these*

¹¹⁶ Paulus Zacchias, *Quaestiones medicolegales*, Lugduni, 1674, lib. iii. tit. I. q. v, p. 229 ff.

¹¹⁷ Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, lib. iv. tit. i. q. vi, p. 295-6. The piety of both Theresa of Ávila and Philip Neri was supposed to have been revealed through their levitation.

¹¹⁸ Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, lib. iv. tit. I. q. x, p. 320.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, lib. iv. tit. I. q. v, p. 293.

things, do not dare simply to deny spells'.¹²⁰ He cannot dismiss them altogether, but it is his sceptical approach that dominates. It is this which Allatios focuses on when he notes that Zacchias has '*considered, treated, and made fun of all these things, or at least the more important*'.¹²¹

Allatios, like Zacchias, tries to explain phenomena as the result of natural causes. He is scornful of those who believe that anyone born during Christmas week is possessed by the devil.¹²² He understands strange behaviour as the result of mental illness, rather than seeing it as the result of diabolic possession, or a demon: '*Tripotamata is a place on the island of Chios - wooded and inaccessible, and never visited by any man, but always infested with ghostly spectres - where it is rumoured that these kallicantzari congregate, and linger and they display their craftsmanship. Therefore [the inhabitants of Chios] dismiss the apparently absurd, inane and delirious as men of a similar sort.*'¹²³ Given this attempt to demystify and condemn certain beliefs, it is curious that he attacks the explanation of the *gello*, or 'witch' as Allatios calls this creature, provided by the Byzantine scholar Michael Psellos. In chapter IX he writes '*Michael Psellus attributes similar diseases of children to natural causes, which we see in our research to arise from witches.*'¹²⁴ Allatios, who would normally advocate such a stance, in this case appears to criticise it. Indeed, in the next chapter he does not reject Psellos' natural explanation for the *babutzikarios*,¹²⁵ regarding it as '*to be praised*', rather than as '*failing to satisfy*', as his exposition on witchcraft does.¹²⁶

This would seem to suggest that the case of witchcraft is a special one. This is not necessarily because Allatios believes in witches. Other indications in the text point

¹²⁰ Ibid, lib. ii. tit. ii. q. xiii, p. 189.

¹²¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 115.

¹²² Ibid, ch. X, p. 140.

¹²³ Ibid, ch. XI, p. 141.

¹²⁴ Ibid, ch. IX, p. 138.

¹²⁵ The *babutzikarios*, like the *vrikolakas* or the *gello* was a demon, which different sources associate with different characteristics, a common occurrence with these popular demons. For some it was a frightening goblin, for others it brought on the symptoms of indigestion. See Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. X, p. 140.

¹²⁶ Ibid, chs. IX-X, pp. 139-40.

to a dismissal of this belief. Earlier he talks of witchcraft as the absurdities that people resort to in order to ward off the threat presented by foolish old women.¹²⁷ This suggests he considers witchcraft neither threatening nor efficacious. It would also be peculiar, having mentioned Zacchias' scepticism of witchcraft, then to criticise Psellos for failing to believe. It is Allatios' relationship with Zacchias and his text which can explain the dismissal of Psellos' explanation. The section on witchcraft is the one part of *De opinionibus* which directly relates to Zacchias' work. Allatios writes that he had intended to write of '*striges and poisoners and on the futile beliefs of men on this subject*' but had been hindered by past and present authors, including Zacchias, who had displayed their expertise on this matter.¹²⁸ Zacchias, as we have noted, has an extremely sceptical outlook: he prefers an explanation in terms of natural causes. However, he also explains why beliefs in witchcraft have arisen. Beliefs in the *lamia* and other such creatures are the result of strong poisons which '*drag men from their minds*' and cause them to see such things.¹²⁹ Thus he explains both why people claim to see witches and why certain individuals behave in witch-like ways. Psellos' analysis of witchcraft, where he states that the children are wasting away because of a particular disease, explains only the death of the child. He has failed to resolve the problem of why certain individuals are marked out as witches, and how people can see things which do not exist. Allatios therefore finds Zacchias' treatment of witchcraft more satisfactory than that of Psellos.

In contrast, Allatios accepts Psellos' discussion of the *babutzikarios*. Unlike his discussion of the *gello*, this explanation does take account of the important social factor of why people experience events in terms of demonic activity. He describes how the superstition arose from a pagan belief, and was later associated with the devil. He also provides an explanation of why someone might see the *babutzikarios*: '*This [apparition] arose from the common infection of body and mind, for his mind was troubled by an inherited disease. At that time he could not see very well*', and

¹²⁷ Ibid, ch. VII, p. 136.

¹²⁸ Ibid, ch. I, p. 115.

¹²⁹ Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, lib, ii, tit. I, q. xvii, p. 150.

'what [in fact] they [his eyes] perceived internally, seemed to him [to come] from the outside'; that is, he was hallucinating.¹³⁰ Psellos adds that this creature is often seen at Christmas and Epiphany, on account of the necessary festivities, when people visit each other at night. The combination of revelry and darkness encourages the imagination. Thus his account of the *babutzikarios* is more in line with the kind of explanations favoured by Zacchias.

Moreover, as Zacchias does not discuss the *babutzikarios*, Psellos has a clear field. Allatios does not have to condemn him in order to show his addressee in a favourable light. However, Allatios also criticises Psellos elsewhere in the text. He argues that Psellos' explanations of demons in terms of sickness are inadequate. It cannot be sickness that causes men to see the *kallikantzaros*, the *vrikolakas*, or the *neireides* as these are seen outside the home, while sick men are usually in bed. Moreover, he claims that the phantoms that Psellos relates to sickness are really nightmares, and have nothing to do with the beings which people see on the streets. However, this assessment seems to strike a false note, for Allatios admits that these things do also know natural causes '*for many are undone by a visual impact or by a ghost which they say they have seen, or contract some disease of the body*,'¹³¹ an explanation which, as we have seen, Psellos provides for the *babutzikarios*.

Why does Allatios attack Psellos in this way? It is not only Zacchias who is in competition with Psellos. Psellos is one of Allatios' main sources, and the only one who presents rational explanations similar to those of Allatios and Zacchias. Allatios was well aware of Psellos' expertise in the field of popular beliefs. In his work *De Psellis*, as well as distinguishing between different authors, he also provided an inventory of the works of Psellos available in various libraries in Rome.¹³² This includes not only the *De daemonibus*, *De gillo*, *De babutzikariis* but also the *Quae daemonibus graeci opinentur*, (otherwise known as *Opinationes graecorum*), 'a

¹³⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. X, p. 140; O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 163.

¹³¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XX, p. 162.

¹³² Leo Allatios, *De Psellis et eorum scriptis diatriba*, in J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, Paris: Petit-Montrouge, vol. 122, 1864, cols. 513 ff.

Greek text, as yet unedited'.¹³³ Allatios sets out to trace similar beliefs to those described by Psellos, and his own work *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinionibus* echoes that of Psellos. In his introduction Allatios justifies his choice of subject matter on account of its originality. Hindered by Zacchias' expertise in the past, Allatios has turned to the modern period in order to offer something new: 'Would I therefore be so idle as to offer nothing with which I might oblige my Zacchias?'¹³⁴ It is not enough for him to bring to light a little known work of Psellos. In line with the dispute between the ancients and moderns, he attempts to prove his knowledge is superior to that of Psellos. His subject matter - popular beliefs, which he claims have always remained the same - places him on an equal footing with Psellos. Unlike most topics, popular beliefs allow Allatios to claim to know as much or more than his sources. Therefore he feels the need to undermine Psellos' understanding of popular beliefs, and spuriously uses Psellos' natural explanations to prove his lack of contact with popular beliefs. After mentioning Psellos' natural explanation he writes, 'But what have these matters to do with those things, which we have reviewed so far [originating in] the superstitions of the common people?'¹³⁵ By criticising Psellos he demonstrates his own greater knowledge and raises the value of his offering to Zacchias. Thus these criticisms have more to do with academic rivalry than any real shortcomings in Psellos' work.

Therefore the *De opinionibus* of Allatios, although not one of his major works, does synthesize the major themes in his other writings and deserves close attention, for it contains important strands of the intellectual thought of the seventeenth century. Nor is this all the text has to offer. The next section will discuss the value of the content for the study of Greek popular religion.

¹³³ Allatios, *De Psellis*, col. 484; 522. It is curious that here Allatios expresses doubts about the authorship of *De Daemonibus* and *Opinationes Graecorum*, attributing them not to the eleventh-century Michael Psellos, but the Michael Psellos who taught Leo Byzantinus. However, he does see them as two parts of a whole. In *De opin.* Allatios treats all the works he excerpts as by the same author.

¹³⁴ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 115.

¹³⁵ Ibid, ch. XX, p. 162.

The problem of 'popular religion'

Allatios describes the contents of his text as pertaining to the beliefs and practices of the common people.¹³⁶ Most of the phenomena which he discusses relate to the *exotika*, the demonic creatures which were believed either to live on the margins of the physical world and inhabit hills, forests, mountains, seas, or at the margins of earthly experience, and inhabit graves. These include the child stealing demon or *gello*, the revenant or *vrikolakas*, goblin-like creatures called *kallikantzaroi*, and the beautiful *neréides*.¹³⁷ Most of these are familiar from modern Greek folklore, but there is a dearth of sources for these subjects for Byzantine and early modern Greece. The largest body of source material, before that provided by Allatios, was collected together in the works of Michael Psellos, the eleventh-century philosopher, who applied his talents to more arcane material such as alchemy, demonology and the *exotika*. Even these works, on which Allatios draws heavily, do not discuss the breadth of topics which are to be found in Allatios' own work. He moves through the human life cycle, from treating customs surrounding birth to those surrounding death, dealing with everyday customs, selecting the most memorable to present to his readers.

His method presents the historian with both problems and insights. He applies his understanding of history, that '*beliefs, customs, virtues, vices*' always remain the same, to the practices he investigates.¹³⁸ The text presents a wealth of material sieved out of his impressive antiquarian endeavours, showing the great antiquity of the practices, in some cases stretching back to pre-Christian times. It is an excellent collection of source material, but it is difficult to know how far examples from the fourth and fifth century reflect practices of his own day. On the other hand, Allatios also describes his own personal experiences, which are extremely useful, particularly in relation to his description of the *vrikolakas* and the *stoicheion* or spirit of place. The material from disparate times and sources is tied together by Allatios' own interpretation. While this can be useful, it too needs to be examined rather than taken

¹³⁶ Ibid, ch. XX, p. 162.

¹³⁷ On the *exotika*, especially in modern Greece see Charles Stewart, *Demons and the Devil: Moral Imagination in Modern Greek Culture*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

¹³⁸ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 114.

at face value, especially given the western context of the work.

Allatios' text deals not with the dogma and doctrine of the Orthodox church, but the religious customs and practices of ordinary people in everyday life. Popular religion is an important topic for historians to study. Failure to research into popular religion leads to an assumption of uniform religious practice and an approach to the culture of the period which lacks depth. Without attention to this area, the historian is unable to appreciate a large part of the way people experienced the world in the past. Moreover, as religious practices and beliefs are not isolated from the rest of the world, this path also leads to blind spots in other areas making it impossible to comprehend the relationship between popular and formal religion and the factors that shape behaviour in other areas of life. Although there have been many works concerning this topic in the West, in the East the research into this aspect of medieval and early modern life is only just beginning.¹³⁹ This is partly because the East, unlike the West, lacked the large body of research material provided by the Inquisition and so popular practices are more difficult to unearth.

'Religion'

Important as 'popular religion' is, it remains elusive and difficult to define. The terms 'popular' and 'religion' are both problematic. Allatios uses neither of them but instead refers to the *opinationes* of the Greeks, a word that is difficult to translate into English. The direct translation is 'opinions' but *opinationes* often has negative connotations during this period. It refers slightly to the beliefs and practices it describes. Although the English word 'superstition' catches the tone, it is not appropriate to use it because it is too derogatory and indicates a value judgement imposed by the ecclesiastical authorities on a set of beliefs and practices of which

¹³⁹ Richard P. H. Greenfield, *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology*, Amsterdam: A. M. Hakker, 1988; Richard P. H. Greenfield, 'A Contribution to the Study of Palaeologan Magic', in Henry Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*, Washington D.C.: Harvard University Press, 1995, pp. 117-153; Greenfield, 'Gylou', 83-141; A. Delatte and Ch. Josserand, 'Contribution à l'étude de la démonologie byzantine' *Mélanges Bidez; Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'Histoire Orientales* 2 (1934), 207-232.

they disapprove. The negative overtones mean that it is not useful for an investigation that intends to approach the beliefs and practices on their own terms. 'Beliefs' although lacking the pejorative nuances of superstition encourages an approach to the contents of the text in terms of a very modern concept of religion.¹⁴⁰ The understanding of religion in terms of beliefs was the result of western developments from the seventeenth century onwards and is not an appropriate one to apply to this subject matter, which deals with eastern popular religion. It also does not take account of emotions and actions which were often more important to the religious adherent than belief.¹⁴¹ 'Belief' and 'superstition', moreover, encourage an approach to religion in terms of discrete elements, separated from the social context in which they are found, unrelated to each other, or to the world as a whole. Instead the term 'religion' suggests the individual practices form part of a meaningful system and their importance stretches beyond their immediate context. 'Religion' more than 'superstition' or 'belief' encourages a sympathetic approach, essential for understanding the beliefs and practices in the terms of those for whom they were meaningful.

'Popular'

There are also difficulties with the term 'popular'. It subdivides religion and usually links particular practices and ways of thinking to particular groups in society. Moreover, it sets up an opposition between 'popular' and 'non popular' religion, generating the problem, not only of the nature of popular religion but also of defining what is left over once it has been marked off: certain social groups and characteristics are often associated with a particular side of the divide. The pairs peasantry/elite, lay/clerical, oral/literate are imposed on the division of religious experience. This obscures the fact that none of these categories necessarily correspond to one another. The clergy were not always drawn from the elite, particularly in the case of seventeenth-century Greece. Nor were the elite or clergy

¹⁴⁰ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion: A New Approach to the Religious Traditions of Mankind*, London: New English Library Ltd., 1964, pp. 39-40.

¹⁴¹ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 181 ff.

necessarily highly literate.¹⁴² Sometimes there was little difference between the lower rural clergy and their constituents in terms of degree of literacy or social standing. It is clear from many studies that religious experience cannot be divided along these lines.¹⁴³

However, the pioneers of the study of popular religion, such as Jaques Le Goff made divisions along these lines. This and their understanding of popular beliefs in terms of 'primitive Christianity' means that their model will not be followed here. Le Goff investigated the opposition between the high culture of the erudite and popular culture.¹⁴⁴ This division corresponds to that between the clergy and the laity: the former is characterised by the influence of the Greco-roman education system, the latter by its folkloric content.¹⁴⁵ The two groups are divided by the content of their religion as well as by social structures. It seems at first that Le Goff considers both cultures to be Christian, but coloured in different ways by the respective cultural influences. Later, however, he treats Christianity as the property of the ecclesiastics alone. The superimposition of Christian themes on their 'pagan' predecessors, which were embedded in the folklore was not a '*continuation but an abolition*'.¹⁴⁶ Similarly, even when the folkloric influence was not destroyed, the themes were

¹⁴² In seventeenth-century Greece it was the local priests who provided the laity with regular contact with the ecclesiastical hierarchy. These priests were usually drawn from the artisan or peasant population and were extremely close to them in way of life. Unlike Catholic priests they were allowed to marry and the majority sustained themselves through farming their plots of land, as did their parishioners. This was supplemented by charging for administering the sacraments, a forbidden practice, necessitated by the lack of financial support by the church. Their level of education was not high, although they did have to prove that they could read and write and had memorised the books of the church before ordination. This lack of training was reflected in the quality of guidance of the laity. On the strictures against charging for the sacraments see Rycout, *Churches*, p. 114; on the tariffs charged for this: Rycout, *Churches*, p. 114. See also Simon, *Critical History*, p. 22; Thomas Smith, *Greek Church*, p. 90; on the education of the priests: Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 40; On the guidance of the laity: Rycout, *Churches*, preface.

¹⁴³ Aaron Gurevitch, *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, translated by Janos M. Bak and Paul A. Hollingsworth, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. xviii ff.; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion', in Charles Trinkhaus and Heiko A. Oberman (eds.) *In Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, Papers from the University of Michigan Conference [held on April 20-22, 1972], Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974, pp. 307-336, pp. 309-310.

¹⁴⁴ Jacques Le Goff, *Time, Work and Culture in the Middle Ages*, translated by Arthur Goldhammer, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980, p. xiv.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 157.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 157.

changed in meaning 'by their new Christian form'. Thus he attempts to define popular religion in terms of its folkloric content, as opposed to the 'pure' Christianity of the clerical elite. This separation cannot be maintained in seventeenth-century Greece, or during the Byzantine periods where literacy was more widespread amongst the laity than in the West and some theologians were even drawn from the lay rather than the monastic community.

Greece and folklore

Although the social divisions cannot be maintained for this study, Le Goff's approach has the advantage of focusing attention on the content of popular beliefs - the slow moving folkloric current which preserves in his words a 'primitive culture'.¹⁴⁷ Many authors through the ages writing on Greece have also found this a very useful approach. Often travellers saw a link to the ancient Greece with which they were so familiar in the beliefs of the people they came across. They considered that the past had been preserved in the beliefs and practices of the peasantry. Richard Pococke for example saw the inhabitants of Greece as living texts: '*I regard the Brain of these poor Greeks, as so many living Inscriptions, serving to retain the name quoted by Theophrastus and Dioscorides, they, though subject to diverse Alterations, will doubtless last much longer than most solid marble because they are every day renewed, whereas Marble wears off, or is destroy'd*'.¹⁴⁸ The way of life of the peasantry is a living monument to the past. This direct focus on the content of popular beliefs therefore has negative overtones, predisposing the historian to consider them as simplistic and unchanging.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 156.

¹⁴⁸ Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East and Some Other Countries. Vol II part ii Observations on the Islands of the Archipelago, Asia Minor, Thrace, Greece etc.*, London, printed for the author by W. Bowyer, 1745, p. 68. See also Guys, *Sentimental Journey through Greece in a Series of Letters Written from Constantinople*, 2 vols., Dublin: Milliken, 1823, vol. 1, p. 146: '*...it is among the common people I always look for ancient manners. Those refine but little, and are ever tenacious of the traditions handed down to them by their forefathers, and are so much attached to their customs, that they bear with them the force of so many ancient laws.*'

This assertion that folkloric beliefs somehow preserve the distant past continues in Lawson's *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* where he traces connections between beliefs and practices he has observed in modern Greece, and aspects of ancient Greek myths. He argues that although Christianity altered the ethical standards and imposed a religiously sanctioned morality on ancient Greece, practically all ancient religious customs continue until today. Christianity was merely grafted on to paganism and the conciliatory practices of the early church meant that the Christianity of the masses became polytheistic. He concludes that the inhabitants of modern Greece '*with all this external Christianity ... are as pagan and as polytheistic in their hearts as were ever their ancestors.*'¹⁴⁹

For all his erudition, there are major flaws in Lawson's approach. He provides a genealogy of specific aspects of ancient Greek religion, tracing them from the classical period until the modern day. He considers these beliefs and practices in terms of their antecedents and makes no attempt to understand their role within the Christian context. In fact, for him their Christianity is just a cover, underneath which the system of paganism continues to exist: these practices are meaningless in the context of modern Greece. He never considers the question of how Christianity could alter the ethical standards but have no effect on the beliefs and practices.

Of course this approach is not that of Le Goff, who considers that the folkloric aspects were changed fundamentally by their interaction with Christianity. Moreover, where Lawson is investigating modern Greece, Le Goff is considering a period in which he sees the syncretisation of Christianity and the pre-existing structures and beliefs taking place. This is not the case for modern Greece, or even Greece of the seventeenth century where the identification of two separate world views is inaccurate.¹⁵⁰ The fusion between Christianity and paganism occurred long ago. People considered themselves to be Christian, and the older beliefs had long ago become enmeshed and inseparable from the Christian outlook on the world.

¹⁴⁹ Lawson, *Folklore*, 47.

¹⁵⁰ Stewart, *Demons*, p. 7.

Therefore Le Goff's model is not a suitable one for the investigation of popular beliefs of the seventeenth century.

For Gurevitch too, popular religion is this syncretism between the folkloric and Christian worlds. It is '*that world-perception which emerges from the complex and contradictory interaction of the reservoir of traditional folklore and Christianity*'.¹⁵¹ Again, the sources of this tradition are the pre-Christian beliefs and practices which have continued to exist in the 'lower levels' of culture of society. However, this definition is still problematic, because it continues to posit the existence of a pure Christianity and denies that the folkloric elements have informed the development of Christianity as a whole. Moreover, concentrations on folklore by historians, such as Le Goff and Gurevitch, as well as early twentieth-century scholars of folklore like Lawson, usually leads to a *longue durée* approach. This approach considers folklore or popular culture as static or at least slow moving, with meanings frozen in time, and does not consider it as relating to different developments in the natural and social world.

Difficulties arise therefore when 'popular religion' is defined either in terms of its social constituent or its folkloric content and separateness from Christianity. In fact, the term popular belief is so difficult to pin down that some historians have decided against its use. Eamon Duffy in *The Stripping of the Altars* writes '*in talking of the religious beliefs and practices of the late medieval parishioner, I have avoided all but the occasional use of the notion of "popular religion", a term laden with questionable assumptions about the nature of non popular religion and the gap between the two*'.¹⁵² Despite all these issues, however, many historians have continued to use the term, and even those who have rejected it completely have substituted others, albeit with less of a history of disputes attached. Even Duffy found it necessary to qualify 'religion' with the word 'traditional'.¹⁵³ Although there are serious problems with the way popular or its alternatives are defined, these labels

¹⁵¹ Gurevitch, *Popular Culture*, p. xv.

¹⁵² Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c. 1400-1580*, London: Yale University Press, 1992, p. 3.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 3.

appear to allow historians to discuss a form of experience excluded from the unqualified term 'religion'.

Therefore it is useful to consider briefly why historians have found it necessary to make such distinctions. The problems in this area arise partly from the western way of thinking about religion. It emphasises the institutional aspects of religion and its dogmas and doctrines.¹⁵⁴ Until recently, this has also influenced the way it has been studied. Traditionally historians have written histories of the church as an institution and of the development of its dogma and doctrine. This approach has also been encouraged by the nature of their sources, the majority of which come from writers at the centre of the institution, those involved in its running, or in defining its theology. The texts they produce are often focused on defining the faith or laying down ecclesiastical prescriptions. In the first instance this does not include the experiences, emotions or practices of the adherents of the religion. Thus there is a correlation between the source material and the traditional view taken by historians.

Although their interests are wider and do not correspond to those of traditional historians, the approach of historians of *mentalité* such as Le Goff and Gurevitch is still influenced by the viewpoint of their sources which for the most part are normative and prescriptive. Authors of these sources draw a line between those practices and beliefs which they define as Christian, and those which lie outside this sphere. It is easy to follow the distinction that they make and view everything which lies outside their norm as erroneous and unchristian. This we can see in Le Goff and Gurevitch who postulate a pure, unadulterated Christianity in opposition to popular folkloric beliefs. This does not encourage an approach to the beliefs on the terms of those who held them.

Finally, a problem arises from the historian's method. The historian is always moving backwards and forwards between the way things 'should be', and the way they 'are'. Often, as in the Inquisition records, the two appear in opposition in the

¹⁵⁴ Smith, *Meaning and End*, p. 43ff.

same text. This problem of 'popular' versus official religion has arisen less in disciplines such as anthropology, where religion is considered more in terms of the beliefs and practices of individuals and less in terms of the conformity to a normative structure, and is approached through people's experiences rather than texts. Geertz in *Islam Observed* analyses the experience of religion in two separate Islamic societies without referring to normative dogma or doctrine.¹⁵⁵ For anthropologists religion is a cultural phenomenon, a shared system of meanings and values.¹⁵⁶ Beliefs and practices can only be understood in the context in which they appear.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, these are not isolated in the religious system but are connected to the world of practical action. The focus of attention is on how the beliefs and practices work in the society and their meaning for individuals who subscribe to them rather than focusing on the extent to which they conform or diverge from the normative texts. Such an approach to religion allows the observer to study the beliefs on their own terms.

The anthropological model is extremely useful, but as it stands it is too consensual for a historian interested in change and development. The question of religion is often a contested one, especially in a society such as Ottoman Greece, where there are different representatives of the different confessional approaches as well as Orthodox representatives, and where the experience of popular religion is revealed through texts which are in opposition to it. In many cases the symbols of the religion are misunderstood by the different groupings. Moreover, even within the groupings, as within Orthodoxy, divergent strands appear with different outlooks, and, although the symbol is sometimes shared, the meanings diverge, bringing conflict.¹⁵⁸ Any model needs to be able to deal with this conflict.

¹⁵⁵ Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968 *Seven Theories of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 262.

¹⁵⁶ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, London: Fontana Press, 1993; and Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992, p. 91ff.

¹⁵⁷ Clifford Geertz *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology*, New York: Basic Books, 1983, p. 44.

¹⁵⁸ See chapter 6 below, pp. 188-190.

It is interesting that when a conflict between practice and text comes to light the term 'popular' begins to emerge in anthropological texts too.¹⁵⁹ In these circumstances anthropologists like historians use the term in an attempt to avoid the dominance of institutional doctrine and dogma and approach the wider experience and practice of religion. The model of Karen Louise Jolly, laid out in her *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England*, manages to resolve this problem to a certain extent. For her, the narrower, more tightly defined formal religion is situated inside a wider more loosely bounded popular religion, in fact formal religion is a subset of popular religion.¹⁶⁰ Popular religion is more inclusive, and accepts most of the tenets of the formal church, albeit in a more simplified form, and in spite of its tight definition, formal religion is not divorced from the culture in which the embracing popular religion is situated.¹⁶¹

Her model avoids focusing on the opposition between popular and formal, and the other pairs of oppositions which have often been mapped on to these divisions: lay and clergy, literate and oral; concentrating instead on the meeting points between the two viewpoints: the boundary between popular and formal religion.¹⁶² This enables the dynamic interaction between the two to be investigated. The practices described by Allatios also stand on this boundary between popular and formal religion. Like Jolly's elf charms, the exorcisms and prayers Allatios recounts contain elements which reveal the Christianity of the practitioners, although the practices do not lie inside the sphere of formal religion. Jolly's model is therefore useful for an investigation into the interaction and dialogue between formal and popular religion.

However, Jolly's model focuses on where the practices themselves should be placed in her model; whether they fall into the sphere of formal religion, are rejected by it or stand on the boundary between formal and popular religion. It is not easily adapted

¹⁵⁹ Jill Dubisch, 'Pilgrimage and Popular Religion at a Greek Holy Shrine', in Ellen Badone (ed.), *Religious Orthodoxy and Popular Faith in European Society*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 113-136.

¹⁶⁰ Karen Louise Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England: Elf Charms in Context*, London: University of North Carolina Press, 1996, p. 9.

¹⁶¹ Ibid, pp. 19-20.

¹⁶² Ibid, p. 44.

to an examination of different perspectives with regard to the practice in question, that is, the different ways in which a single practice is interpreted by representatives of the formal church and by the faithful believers. Different groups of people will classify beliefs and practices in different ways. The boundaries between formal and popular will be differently placed, or in fact may not even exist, depending upon the viewpoint. For example, a lay person performing an exorcism has a different evaluation of his actions to that of a member of the church hierarchy. Classification of the belief or practice depends on the standpoint of the individual.

Again, the model does not take into account the possibility of interpreting the same events and practices in a multitude of different ways, depending on the framework of reference of the onlooker. The context into which the event is placed will depend on its classification by the viewer. For example, is unction to be viewed in the context of popular beliefs or within the narrower boundaries of formal theology? Again, the significance of an event or happening might be understood in different ways by different groups of people. One aim of this thesis is to consider Allatios' viewpoint and the extent to which it accurately represents the popular practices of seventeenth-century Greece. The model must be able to take account of the different perspectives. Therefore, I will concentrate on a practice described by Allatios, and examine it from three different angles: in terms of popular religion, the perspective of official Orthodoxy, which in Jolly's model falls within the wider sphere of popular Orthodoxy, and Allatios' own perspective, which involves a consideration of the western Catholic context in which he is writing. Throughout the thesis I will be moving between these three reference areas, examining their interaction and interrelation.

This method will be followed throughout the discussion of the contents of Allatios' text. Separate chapters will be devoted to the discussion of individual *exotika*. Stewart has criticised the tendency amongst scholars in the past to examine the *exotika* individually, as separate beings: it harks back to the folklorists and their search for survivals in ancient Greece. Stewart argues that different communities

divide the range of demons in different ways, and give them different names. Instead, he treats them as a '*category of culture*' gathering them together into a pool of interchangeable features in order to treat the common themes arising from them.¹⁶³ While I am aware of these issues, this thesis approaches popular religion in terms of its interaction with ecclesiastical rites (partly because of the nature of the sources). It also follows Allatios' text and concentrates on moments of life crisis - birth, death, marriage, sickness. It was not intended to divide the chapters into investigations of single *exotika* but rather to investigate their roles in the belief and practices surrounding particular times of life. This approach emphasises the social and theological context of the beliefs and practices in order to gain a better understanding of the way they interacted with the world. This is particularly important as there has been no study of Greek popular belief during the Ottoman period.

The historical context in which the beliefs and practices are embedded is stressed in this approach. As discussed above many authors investigating popular religion take a

'longue durée' or as Stewart terms it a '*stretched synchronic approach*', justifying this by the constant nature of both the Orthodox church, and beliefs surrounding demons over the period from the fourth to the twentieth century.¹⁶⁴ Historians, however, have problems with such approaches. Firstly, and most basically, it is difficult to conclude that beliefs have remained constant without research into the intervening periods. Secondly, it is clear that the theology of the Orthodox church developed in response to problems and issues that arose. Even articulation of a

¹⁶³ Stewart, *Demons*, p. 162.

¹⁶⁴ Stewart, *Demons*, pp. 139-140. '*The perspective taken below is a stretched synchronic rather than truly historical one, since the values that the exotika articulate have remained relatively constant over a long period. Both their position in a moral field and this moral field itself have been defined since early Christianity. Although there is considerable variation in the forms assumed by demons, their role in providing illness or death at specific times of the day, year or lifecycle has been largely the same from the fourth century to the present day. Most important, they have always stood for a range of values and actions antithetical to those inspired by the Church. And the church, in turn has proposed Orthodox values that themselves have remained constant... a long synchronic approach is perfectly in line with the church's conception of itself.... On matters of moral theological concern, church doctrine has been remarkably insulated from change. Historical developments in other areas of life such as economy and politics have only altered certain outward aspects of the Church.*'

previously unwritten consensus changes its nature, focusing attention on a specific issue. Moreover, theological and social debates and developments have spin-offs as far as popular beliefs are concerned. In theological debates popular beliefs are often drawn in to slander the opposing side, or included within the definition of heresy. The attitude of the church to popular belief and its relationship with the laity therefore develops over time. It is not only the outward appearance of the church which changes with the assumption of increased legal duties during the Ottoman state, but also how it relates to the transgressions of the laity. The development in the relationship between sin and crime during this period would be a fruitful area for research. Such developments affect the church's approach to popular belief and can affect popular belief itself. If it is now acknowledged that it is '*fruitful to focus on the dialectical character of the interrelationship*'¹⁶⁵ and that there is between popular and official religion a '*circular movement of ideas between cultural levels*',¹⁶⁶ popular religion can no longer be addressed satisfactorily in a synchronic study.

Sources for popular religion

If Allatios' interpretations are to be investigated, they must be compared with other approaches to the same material. Despite the paucity of material on popular practices, evidence is provided by *nomokanones*, professions of faith, and reports from western travellers and missionaries. Each of these sources provides an insight into popular practices from a different perspective.

Nomokanones

Nomokanones are texts compiled from civil and ecclesiastical law. The most widely used *nomokanon* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is the *Nomokanon* of Malaxos (1561), attributed to the sixteenth-century historian and canonist Manuel Malaxos.¹⁶⁷ Together with the fourteenth-century *Hexabiblos* of Harmenopoulos it is

¹⁶⁵ Ellen Badone, 'Introduction', in Ellen Badone (ed.), *Religious Orthodoxy and Popular Faith in European Society*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ In fact it was not written by the scriptor of this name, but his cousin Nicholas Malaxos, and the priest Zacharios Skordyllos. See Runciman, *Great Church*, 1968, p. 210; See Demetrios B.

a major source of law for the Orthodox community during the Ottoman period. *Nomokanones*, however, must not merely be seen as legal codes. They differ both in the breadth of topics covered and in the approach to the transgressor. The accused is approached from an ecclesiastical point of view, administering the 'spiritual medicine' of penance, rather than civil punishments. The *nomokanones* tap into the sources and traditions governing private confession and penance. The *nomokanon* of Malaxos attributes certain sections to a *nomokanon* of a certain John the Faster to whom the introduction of a more lenient penitential system has been attributed. The penance and confession he advocated was private rather than public and assumed a personal relationship between the confessor and the spiritual father. While the Christian must confess his sins the priest should urge his spiritual child to confess and guide him away from sin. The *nomokanones* of both John the Faster and Malaxos guide the priest in his duty and contain information not only about the path away from sin, but the sin itself. Wishing to combat a certain practice, the church describes it in order that the confessor might recognise it and take the appropriate action. The texts form a meeting point between the laity and the church. Therefore they can be extremely useful as a source for beliefs of the laity.

There are, however, limitations to the usefulness of this source. The way it is constructed by compiling information from earlier legal codes or by copying from existing *nomokanones*, makes it difficult to establish from the text whether the information is relevant to the seventeenth century. Again, as a source of normative behaviour *nomokanones* set out to eradicate or change lay belief. Can their description of the aberrant behaviour be trusted? How far did their authors have knowledge of the beliefs described in the texts? Finally, it must be remembered that the amount and type of information is not necessarily indicative of the intensity of the lay belief itself, but of the church's concern over this behaviour. If these points are borne in mind, however, the *nomokanon* can be an extremely useful source.

Oikonomides, "«Χρονογράφου» τοῦ Δοροθέου τὰ λαογραφικά", *Λαογραφία* 18 (1959), 116-124.

Professions of faith and Greek writings on the state of the church

Other Greek works, such as the professions of faith of the patriarchs and the discussions of the Orthodox church written for a western audience, provide additional sources for the line taken by the higher churchmen, and also occasional glimpses of popular practice. The professions of faith are also very useful in revealing the pressure the church hierarchy was under from both Protestants and Catholics, and the way their doctrine started to influence the outlook of the church during this period.¹⁶⁸ The texts on the Orthodox church written by Greeks taking refuge in the West can be compared with the works on the same topic written by western authors such as Paul Rycaut and Thomas Smith. One of the works most consulted by contemporaries was the *De statu hodiernorum Graecorum* (1619) of Christophoros Angelos.¹⁶⁹ Angelos had been a student at the Academy of Athens until he was expelled on the pretext that he was a Spanish spy. He then made his way to England where his knowledge on the Greek church was in great demand. In many ways, later writers can be seen to follow the format of this work which laid down the customs of the Greeks and their position on the sacraments, for a western audience. Obviously it has the advantage that it was written by a member of the Orthodox church, so it was more likely to have a sympathetic approach to the subject. Unfortunately his discussions are often irritatingly brief, and in the main he is not interested in popular religion.

Western travellers

During the seventeenth century the number of westerners travelling to Greece increased. The importance of trade with the Ottoman Empire had led to a network of ambassadors and consuls and all their attendant staff. These people wrote, stimulating the interest of westerners, and made travel in Greece more accessible, although it still remained a dangerous business. Other aspects of western life also

¹⁶⁸ For further information on this topic see Timothy Ware, *Eustratios Argenti. A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964, pp. 7-16; 137-154.

¹⁶⁹ On Angelos see Legrand, *Bibliographie*, vol. 2, 1894, pp. 113-117, where Legrand reproduces a passage from *Christophoros Angell, A Grecian who tasted of many stripes* where Angelos describes his harsh treatment at the hands of the Turks. See also vol. 3, p. 208.

encouraged an interest in Greece. The classical education of the travellers had aroused an interest in the Greece of bygone days. The ecclesiastical situation also encouraged an interest. Following the Reformation both the Protestant and Catholic churches were interested in securing a union with the Orthodox church. Thus the travellers engage with and report debates about current issues such as transubstantiation, purgatory, etc.. Under the heading of travellers' tales I also include missionaries and those who have spent time in Greece, either touring for professional purposes, or who have lived in Greece for a period of time. All these authors are recounting their experience of a foreign country. Western historians have often been criticised for using such sources. Travellers' prejudices and failure to understand the culture they are describing have led to mistakes, which have then been reproduced by western historians relying on their work.¹⁷⁰ Edward Said in particular has seen in the use of such sources a construction of a view of the East based solely on western understanding filtered through the interpretations of earlier sources and maintaining viewpoints and fallacies. *'Not only is the Orient accommodated to the moral exigencies of Western Christianity; it is also circumscribed by a series of attitudes and judgements that send the Western mind, not first to Oriental sources for correction and verification, but rather to other Orientalist works.'*¹⁷¹ Such a method he considers, perpetuates an imaginary construct of the East.

Although he applied this to Western views of Islam, it is also relevant to the construction of an image of Greece during the early modern period.¹⁷² Greece was often approached in terms of the western expectations of the land and its people, and in the frame of reference created by a combination of classical education, Christian scholarship and earlier travel writings. It has already been shown how Pococke in

¹⁷⁰ Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, 'Introduction', in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, vol. 1: The Central Lands, London: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1982, p. 15.

¹⁷¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, London: Penguin Books, 1995, p. 67.

¹⁷² Said's consideration of orientalism, like Smith's of religion fails to take account of Greek material beyond the classical age. For the construction of the idea of Greece see Margaret Alexiou, 'Modern Greek Studies and the West: Between the Classics and the Orient', *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 4 (1986), 5; 12 n.5; Michael Herzfeld, *Ours Once More: Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece*, Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1982.

the seventeenth century approached the Greeks as *'living inscriptions'*. In the eighteenth century, the merchant and antiquarian Pierre Augustin Guys read the modern Greeks as living commentaries on the ancient texts.¹⁷³ Like Pococke, he emphasises the continuity with the distant past not only in terms of knowledge but also in manner and character. He is so steeped in the body of texts of the past that he not only interprets, but also describes his experience through their words.¹⁷⁴ This of course makes much of his work extremely difficult to use, as it is impossible to know to what extent his frame of reference is distorting his experience.

The travellers' tales themselves also begin to form a framework within which to understand the experience of Greece. Authors begin to quote excerpts from their predecessors to enlarge upon their own experiences, or to fill gaps they discern in their itinerary. Cornelis du Bruyn always carried with him the books of Thevenot, Valle and Olfort Dapper in order to help him find things and to aid his memory. Moreover, he borrowed expressions from these authors to make his own text more complete. In addition, he reproduces letters from numerous authors testifying that the work is correct.¹⁷⁵ In other words, a standard for the 'Greek experience' begins to be laid down, and the encounters of individuals are moulded to fit the existing framework of knowledge.

While Guys' approach, seeing continuity with the glory that was ancient Greece, casts a largely positive light on his Greek contemporaries, many others are highly critical of the inhabitants of Greece. They feel that they do not live up to the promise of their ancestors. Many, like the Anglican chaplain, Thomas Smith, were extremely harsh in their judgements, especially on the state of learning and literacy and its effect on the church. Along with readiness to criticise, the possibility of misunderstanding must also be taken into account. Immersed in their own culture, travellers could easily fail to understand the alien beliefs and practices they

¹⁷³ On the travels of Guys see David Constantine *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, ch. 7.

¹⁷⁴ Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 1, p. 146.

¹⁷⁵ Cornelis du Bruyn, *Voyage au Levant, c'est-à-dire, dans les principaux endroits de l'Asie mineure, dans les isles de Chio, Rhodes et Chypre etc.*, Paris, 1714, p. 3.

encountered. Certainly, some reacted to the unfamiliar ways as though they were a contagious disease and avoided discussing them or treated them with the utmost hostility.

However, when all these issues are taken into account, travellers' tales remain the only sources which describe popular religion 'in action'. The Greek sources, where they take any interest in popular religion often proscribe and reinterpret the belief. The discussion takes place within normative texts and presents a standardised view of popular religion, whereas the travellers' tales, for all their faults, describe the practice. Fortunately, there are accounts which do not fall so deeply into the pits discussed above. For example, Paul Rycaut, the English Consul at Smyrna (1667-1678) presents a very sympathetic and observant description of Greek religion in *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches*. It is greatly enhanced by his deep concern for religious tolerance which rose out of his own background. His immediate family contained members of the Dutch, French and Italian reformed churches.¹⁷⁶ He also brings to it the knowledge gained from spending an extended time in Greece. As well as living for over ten years in Smyrna, he travelled widely in Greece, and was on good terms with numerous ecclesiastics. His work is an extremely useful source for the state of the Greek church in the seventeenth century.

Many missionaries from the West also spent long periods of time in different areas of Greece, and were intimately acquainted with the local population. This should have placed them in an excellent position to report on popular religion, albeit with hostile intention. The reports from Greece, like the reports from Italy, stress the non-Christian nature of the beliefs of the inhabitants, a *topos* which throws the work of the mission into dramatic relief rather than representing the true position.¹⁷⁷ Unfortunately, most of the letters sent back to the Congregation of the Faith and the various heads of the orders detailing their progress were less concerned with the existing religious practices of the inhabitants than the number of potential converts to

¹⁷⁶ Sonia P. Anderson., *An English Consul in Turkey: Paul Rycaut at Smyrna, 1667-1678*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 20.

¹⁷⁷ Fleuriau, *Missions*, pp. 83; 110.

the Catholic faith. Something of an exception was Father François Richard, a Jesuit missionary on the Isle of Santorini, who took more interest in the indigenous population, and describes beliefs and practices in their social context.¹⁷⁸

Travellers too, although they spend far less time in each area, and have a less in depth knowledge of the local community can also be extremely useful. For example Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, the botanist who travelled in Greece by order of the Louis XIV 1700-1702, produces an excellent account of his journey. His curiosity and tolerance, on the whole unclouded by presumptions of the classics, make his account extremely valuable.¹⁷⁹ Travellers, therefore, if used with care, provide an irreplaceable source for popular beliefs, and one which has been much neglected.¹⁸⁰

Folklore

Although folklore collections are full of instances of popular beliefs and practices, this thesis will not make use of them. These collections were made in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and so fall outwith the time period set for this study. It is impossible to use these collections as sources for earlier periods, for the political, social and economic circumstances changed greatly between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, and may have affected the accounts gathered. A more serious problem is that the folklore accounts exist outwith a context, making it very difficult for a historian to make use of them. Similarly, Cretan poetry, which survives from the sixteenth and seventeenth century will not be employed. No comprehensive study has yet been carried out to identify the extent to which the content and form were influenced by western trends in literature, making it difficult to use as evidence for Greek religion.

¹⁷⁸ Richard, *Relation*, pp. 208-226.

¹⁷⁹ Constantine, *Travellers*, ch. 2.

¹⁸⁰ Margaret Alexiou, 'Folklore: an Obituary?', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 9-10 (1984/5-6), p. 4 n. 7 notes the lack of attention paid to material contained within travellers' tales.

Geographical limits

The research has also been limited geographically. Although I am aware that the social and cultural structures vary not only between islands but also between the different communities on each of the islands, the paucity of evidence does not allow the historian to follow the example of the anthropologist and focus the investigation on the details of a particular village community. Instead, I have focused my research on the Cyclades and Chios, islands of similar social and historical conditions, exposed to similar cultural influences. My questions also take account of the limitations of the source material. Thus I do not attempt to investigate the interaction of the popular religion with the local social structure but rather the manner in which popular Orthodoxy interacts with formal Orthodoxy and Catholicism.

Chronological limits

Rejecting the *longue durée* approach, this thesis concentrates on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. From the end of the seventeenth century new dimensions enter into the equation. The decline of the Turkish Empire brings with it increasing repression and the worsening of relations between Orthodox and Muslims. The relationship between Orthodox and Catholics also deteriorates, and the economic position changes greatly from the end of the seventeenth century onwards. This makes it unwise to extend this study beyond the seventeenth century.

Approach to the sources

Allatios, as the main text on popular belief, will be taken as the starting point for the discussion. The issues discussed are those which arise out of his text. However, I will be constantly moving between three points of reference; Allatios' interpretations, the normative texts of the Orthodox church and popular religion. I will consider the questions of how Allatios understands the popular belief. Does he see a distinction between official and popular world views? How far is his interpretation influenced by his position as a Catholic writing in Rome? To what extent has the official Greek viewpoint been affected by the presence of western missionaries? How has the

church's new position within the state affected its interaction with popular beliefs? How does popular religion understand and interact with the rituals of the church?

The Gello and Popular Religion

Psellos wrote in the eleventh century '*the gello truly is an ancient and oft repeated name.*'¹ References to this creature, often referred to as a 'child stealing demon', are found in a wide variety of texts covering an extensive time period. Allatios has discovered references to her in exorcisms, a church history, a *Life* of a patriarch, proverbs, the dictionary *Suidas*, and, even further back, an allusion in the verse of the archaic poet Sappho.² The profusion of amulets, which have been identified as apotropaic instruments directed against the *gello*, indicates that this creature was feared in earlier periods still.³ The belief also extends forward from Allatios' time, appearing in exorcism texts and folklore collections right up into the twentieth century.⁴ Thus the topic presents an ideal opportunity for Allatios to demonstrate his premise: the continuity of customs and morals in each period.⁵ Other earlier authors had made efforts to trace the *gello* back into the distant past, not only in the Greek but also the Hebrew tradition. When Psellos could not find the name *gello* in Greek texts, he turned to another ancient tradition, suggesting the *gello* was connected to the Hebrew demon Lilith.⁶ Psellos' approach has been followed, often very fruitfully, by historians and folklorists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who have shed light on the *gello* by tracing links to analogous creatures in other

¹ Allatios *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 118; Meara, *Michaeli Pselli.*, p. 164.

² Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 118. Sappho, *Sappho: The Poems and Fragments*, with an English translation by C. R. Haines, London: Routledge and Sons Ltd., 1926, p. 171 no. 1157.

³ Greenfield, 'Gylou', 86. He notes that a similarity exists between the engraving of a mounted rider spearing a demon beneath his horse on seals to later depictions. For the seals cf F. H. Stubbings, 'Ivories', in *Perachora: the sanctuaries of Hera Akraia, and Limenia; Excavations of the British School of Archaeology at Athens, 1930-1933.*, (ed.) T. J. Dunbabin, Vol. 2. Pottery, Ivories, Scarabs and Other Objects, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1962, p. 412; John Boardman, *Greek Gems and Finger Rings: Early Bronze Age to Late Classical*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1970, p. 125, pl. 210, 112, 134; John Boardman, *Island Gems. A Study of Greek Seals in the Geometric and Early Archaic Periods*, London: Society for the Promotion of Hellenic Studies, 1963 p. 130, G14.

⁴ Greenfield, 'Gylou', 92, 103.

Demetrios B. Oikonomides, 'Η γελλῶ εἰς τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν καὶ Ῥωμανικὴν λαογραφίαν', *Λαογραφία* 30 (1975), 246-278; Demetrios Oikonomides, 'Yello dans les traditions des peuples helléniques et roumains', *Λαογραφία*, 22 (1965), 328-334; Stewart, *Demons*, pp. 100-101; 174; Stylianos Vios, 'Χιακαὶ παραδόσεις', *Λαογραφία* 8 (1921-1925), 430-1.

⁵ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. II, p. 114.

⁶ Ibid. III p. 117 (Greek); p. 118 (Latin translation). Irène Sorlin, 'Striges et Géloudes. Histoire d'une croyance et d'une tradition', *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), 416, believes that this was because he wanted to claim a popular, rather than classical origin for this text.

traditions.⁷ The aim here, however, is not to follow the method of Psellos and Allatios but to place the *gello* within the theological and social context of the seventeenth century and examine her relevance to everyday life.

The *gello* that appears in Allatios' sources is an extremely unpleasant creature. Her dominant characteristics are her violent behaviour towards women in childbirth and especially her voracious appetite for the blood of new-born children. The fragment from Sappho states enigmatically 'Γελλοῦς παιδοφιλωτέρᾳ': 'those who are madly in love with children', which is expanded by Suidas: 'they supposed that her ghost penetrates children and those dying young.'⁸ This is clarified by a proverb from Lesbos, 'her ghost strikes at children, and they attribute the early deaths of other people to her [i.e. the ghost].'⁹ Ignatios the deacon also comments on the *gello* in his *Life* of the iconophile Patriarch Tarasios (784-806). He asserts that some believe the *gello* 'to attack and kill newly born infants.'¹⁰ Psellos is more emotive: they 'suck blood and devour all the vital fluids which are in the little infant.'¹¹ Finally, in the fourteenth century the writer and cleric Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos describes how the *gello* 'brings the infant from the bedroom, as if about to devour him.'¹² Allatios testifies to the currency of belief for his contemporaries.

The exorcism of the *gello* shows the determination of the creature to pursue her vampire-like desires. Although a plethora of different versions exists and details of the exorcism rite vary in the different texts, the sense remains the same.¹³ The *gello*

⁷ See for example, A. A. Barb, 'Antaura, the Mermaid and the Devil's Grandmother', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute*, 29 (1966), 1-23.

⁸ *Suidae Lexicon*, Ada Adler (ed.), Lipsiae: Teubner, vol 1, p. 512, no. 112.

⁹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 116; Ernst Ludwig von Leutsch and Friedrich Wilhelm Schneidewin (eds.), *Corpus Paroemiographorum Graecorum*, Hildesheim: G. Olm, 1958, vol. 1: 'Zenobius: Centuria', p. 58.

¹⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 117; Ignatios the Deacon, *The Life of the Patriarch*, Stephanos Efthymiadis (ed.), Aldershot: Variorum, 1998, p. 172; See his notes on this passage, pp. 210-211.

¹¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 118; O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164.

¹² Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 117; Nikephoros Kallisti filii Xanthopouli 'Ecclesiasticae Historiae' in J.P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, Paris: Petit-Montrouge, vol. 147, 1865, cols. 345 - 348.

¹³ For information on the variations see the extensive survey of *gello* texts provided by Greenfield, 'Gylou', 83-141.

is an evil demon who attacks children but is ultimately defeated through the power of God and his saints. The description below is taken from the second text provided by Allatios.¹⁴ The tale runs as follows:

*'Under the consulate of King Laurentius, there was a woman in the region of Austidis, or Arabia, by the name of Melitene, who gave birth to seven children, who the accursed creature called Gelu snatched from her. And again Melitene conceived and, with the birth very near, she built a tower which she fortified inside and out and placed twenty-five years' supplies in the tower.'*¹⁵ Then Melitene entered the tower with two girls.

Furthermore, the saints of God, Sisinnios and Sisynodoros, brothers of Melitene, were soldiering in Numeria, or rather Arabia. Therefore, at some point it so happened that when the army was discharged to winter quarters, they came to the tower to visit their own sister. When they arrived at the gates, straining their voices, they shouted to be let in. Melitene did not want to open the gates at all, saying, "I cannot open them for you, for a son was born to me and I am full of fear. Therefore I shall not open [the gates]." They strained their voices, saying, "Open to us, for we are the messengers of God, and we bring the mysteries of God." She opened [the gates] and the saints of God entered. At the same time an unclean spirit came up from the ground and it entered the throat of one of the horses of the saints. In the middle of the night it killed the child.

*Wailing bitterly, Melitene said with an anguished voice, "O Sisinnios, and you Sisynodoros, what have you done to me? For that reason I would not have opened the door to you."*¹⁶

Melitene had already lost many children to the *gello* and went to great lengths to protect herself and her new-born child. This was to no avail as the creature entered her sanctuary together with her brothers. Their intervention, however, was vital. The saints' insistence that she opened the door led to the death of her child but this also provided them with the opportunity to defeat the *gello*. They pursue her, seize her

¹⁴ Greenfield, on the basis of Argenti suggests that the two texts in Allatios might be of Chian origin. At the very least there is no reason to suppose that the second *gello* exorcism related by Allatios originates from Chios, as it was presented to him by Carolus Avantius. He can probably be identified with one Carlo Avanzi, a Paduan Botanist with whom Allatios corresponded. Greenfield, 'Gylou', 93 n. 16; Argenti, *Folklore*, p. 7. For examples of Allatios' correspondence with Avanzi see Cerbu, *Leone Allacci*, p. 121.

¹⁵ The Latin translation from the Greek is faulty here, and so I have followed the Greek text.

¹⁶ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VII, p. 133 (Greek); p. 135 (Latin translation).

and through the power of God force her to return the child. In doing so they also compel the *gello* to reveal how parents could in future protect themselves from her depredations. What begins as an individual tragedy with the abduction of Melitene's baby is transformed into a victory for all parents.

The nature of the *gello*

All the texts cited by Allatios agree on the kind of the behaviour exhibited by the *gello* but they are not so consistent when it comes to the question of her nature. In the exorcism text quoted above, the *gello* appears in the form of a demon. This is apparent from her nature which exhibits characteristics of a demon: she is incorporeal, or at least her substance is more malleable than that of men, giving her the ability to fly thorough the air and change shape at will. She is also described as an 'unclean spirit' or *akátharton pnevma*, one of the commonest terms used to refer to a demon.¹⁷

In other texts, however, it is clearly a human being that performs the dreadful deeds of the *gello*. Allatios states that her wicked acts were attributed to poor and miserable old crones.¹⁸ This is supported by the *nomokanon* of Cotelierius which provides penances for women confessing to being *gelloudes*.¹⁹ Indeed, this takes the belief one step further. Since confession requires an admission of sin, it was not only others who projected the belief on to those they believed had victimised them, but individuals accused themselves of being *gelloudes*. It must be noted here that the sin of being a *gello* was differentiated from that of infanticide, which received separate penances. Thus not all women who killed their children were considered, or considered themselves, to be *gelloudes*.

¹⁷ Ibid: Latin translation: '*spiritus immundus*'. For *akátharton pnevma* see Delatte, 'Contribution', 208. Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 27 notes that this expression was used in the New Testament to refer to demons who possessed people, getting the name from their uncleanness, which resulted from their fall from the angelic state.

¹⁸ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 115.

¹⁹ Cotelierius, '*Ο νομοκάνων του Cotelierius*, Γεώργιος Πουλῆς (ed.), Thessaloniki: Σάκκουλας, 1992, p. 149, canon cccclxxxix; Efthymiadis, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172.

A passage from the *Life of Tarasios* by Ignatios the Deacon, of which Allatios excerpts part, also displays a tendency to view the *gello* as in some sense a human being. Ignatios lays out the facts of a court case judged by Tarasios' father in which two women were brought before him on the charge of being *gelloudes*. Their accusers clearly believed that they had indulged in the same kind of behaviour as the demonic *gello*. Ignatios comments that '*those deceived and beguiled by the spirit of this tale, relate this story as if true [and] try to transfer this accursed deed to weak women, attributing to them the reason why those [children] die before time, by virtue of their conversion into a spirit.*'²⁰ He believes that the deeds in the story have been attributed to a certain sector of the society, that is, to certain 'weak women'. Moreover, this belief was so strong that it led to a court case. Although scornful of the belief himself, Psellos also testifies to its currency among the 'common people'. He records that this '*fancy which occupies the souls of almost all, confers the same power on elderly women. Therefore it adds wings to those tired by age and will secretly convey them to the children.*'²¹ It was popularly believed that individuals did not carry out these acts in their human form, but '*through conversion into a spirit*'. They thus displayed characteristics of demons, for they could fly and pass through material objects which impeded their approach to the children but at the same time they were real humans with a corporeal nature.

Psellos himself rejects these beliefs. He cannot accept the transference of the deed to humans and the consequent assumption of a spiritual nature that this requires.²² The majority of *nomokanones* also attack the belief and prescribe penances for those who believe in the *gello*: '*Those who say that gelloudes are women who suck the blood of children and kill them; this is a deception of the devil and in no way is it accepted.*'²³

²⁰ For the passage quoted by Allatios see *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 117. For the full text see Efthymiadis, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172.

²¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 118; O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164.

²² Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 118.

²³ Gennadios Arabatzoglou, *Φωτίειος Βιβλιοθήκη*, Constantinople, 1933, vol. 2 p. 248. Cf also Βουλής βιβλιοθήκη ms. 83, f 46v, Manouel Malaxos, 'Νομοκάνων Μανουήλ Νοταρίου τοῦ Μάλαξου τοῦ ἐκ Ναυπλίου τοῦ Πελοποννήσου', D. Ginis and N. Pantazopoulos (ed.), "Νόμος", *Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς τῆς Σχολῆς Νομικῶν καὶ Ὀικονομικῶν Ἐπιστημῶν τοῦ Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλονίκης* 1 (1982). [Whole journal].

The *gello* is nothing but an illusion of the devil, cast before those poor in faith in order to draw them into practices which anger God.

The *gello* and the church

There is no strict dividing line between the conceptions of church and laity, popular and elite on this matter. The *nomokanones* were written and administered by clerics or monks and the fact that some texts provide a penance for those who are *gelloudes* indicates that the author accepts the possibility of a human *gello*. Similarly, the exorcism of the *gello* required a priest to carry it out and so also implies the involvement of the church.²⁴ On the other hand, as the example of Psellos indicates, not all of the laity subscribed to the belief. However, of those who did, a number came from the upper classes, and the belief extended even as far as the imperial court. The fourteenth-century writer Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos wrote of the empress:

*'The mother herself truly said that at the time of birth a certain new and different odour of sweetness was brought forth from the land. [She said] that above all (and almost incredible to me) it is a characteristic of little old women (and she who is called empusa [whom] others may call gello) that they bring the infant from the bedroom, as if about to devour him. However, no harm could come to him.'*²⁵

It is therefore impossible to regard this belief as the property of a particular social category. It cuts across boundaries and is accepted or rejected by individuals within different social groupings.

Nevertheless, it is clear from the majority of the *nomokanones* in which the *gello* is mentioned that formal Christianity, as opposed to individual clerics, denied the existence of the *gello*. Belief in the *gello* contravened one of the most important tenets of the church: the omnipotence of God. Orthodox Christianity held that there was only one supreme omnipotent, omniscient creator, God, and that the power of the devil was decisively limited by God's supremacy. Thus the church opposed the

²⁴ See for example the instructions in Theocharis Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι", Συμπόσιο Λαογραφίας τοῦ Βορειοελλαδικοῦ Χόρου, Ἡπειρος-Μακεδονία-Θράκη, Transactions of the Second Conference of Folklore of Northern Greece, Thessaloniki, 1976, p. 411.

²⁵ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 117; Kallistos, 'Ecclesiasticae Historiae', cols 345 D-348.

outlook of the various dualist sects which postulated two principal powers - a creator of good and a creator of evil. The official position was that the devil could only act when allowed to do and this usually took the form of punishing those who had angered God. As a consequence of its anti-dualist stance, Orthodoxy also denied the existence of creatures which performed evil according to their own whims. The *gello* was believed to act according to her own needs and desires, rather than to play a part in God's plan.

The church was also concerned that attributing misfortune to the independent acts of demons and *gelloudes* could lead people away from investigating the true cause of the event and prevent them from examining their consciences and seeking forgiveness for their sins. To a certain extent, a system that explained misfortune and evil in terms of punishment from God held sin to be the root cause of suffering. Parents whose children died soon after birth were expected to perform penance- one year if baptised; three if not baptised; two if the death occurred through negligence.²⁶ The last two both indicate the particular sin of the parents, physical negligence, or far more serious, neglecting the spiritual welfare of the child. The first stipulation, however, does not assign any blame to these parents, but penance must still be performed. Even a death for which the parents had no responsibility disturbed their relationship with God. Attributing the death of the child to the *gello* who worked outside God's plan, both involved the individual in a form of dualism and prevented him from atoning for his sins and restoring his relationship with God.

The *gello* also contravenes the inviolability of the human form. The texts presented by Allatios reveal a range of beliefs concerning the nature of the *gello*: human being, ghost, demon. In fact it is clear from the descriptions above that the *gello* partakes of both human and demonic natures simultaneously. Ignatios and Psellos state that although a human being is singled out as a *gello*, people believe that she takes on demonic form. She can fly, and pass through walls and locked doors.²⁷ Despite this,

²⁶ Cotelarius, *Νομοκάνων*, p. 148-149, cccclxxxiv-ccccclxxxvi.

²⁷ See also John of Damascus, 'Περὶ στρυγγῶν', in J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, Paris: Petit-Montrouge, vol. 94, 1864, col. 1604.

she also has a gender (demons according to official church theology were sexless), feels pain and requires nourishment. This increased corporeality of demons is a characteristic of the popular conception of demons but the official description of demons differentiates them much more clearly from human beings.²⁸ The church wishes to keep these two categories separate and mutually exclusive, believing that the nature of a human being is immutable. Although originally drawn from the text of a pagan philosopher, Psellos' work states this Orthodox position clearly: all '*emphatically deny the distortion of nature, and neither is a wild beast ever clothed as man nor [does] a man become a wild beast,²⁹ nor assuredly a demon nor an Angel.*'³⁰

In spite of this opposition, the sources do not reveal a great concern on the part of the church over these popular beliefs. On the whole, popular beliefs and practices, of which the *gello* was a part, were not threatening, or even of interest to the Byzantine church. There is no discussion of popular practices in the early *nomokanones* beyond the censuring of the collection of herbs for magical purposes.³¹ In the later *nomokanones*, which become more detailed as the church's interest in confession and penance increased from the twelfth century onwards, there is a little more detail.³² Nevertheless, the *gello* is not treated in the majority of *nomokanones* and, where it does appear, the treatment is cursory.³³

The *gello* and Iconoclasm

In certain political and religious circumstances the *gello* and the issues surrounding her ambiguous human/demonic nature take on more importance and thus more

²⁸ Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 212; 214.

²⁹ See Proclus, *Commentaire sur le 'Timée'* André J. Festugière (ed.), Paris: J. Vrin, vol V, 1968, p. 172, 294: 22-295:14. For the Greek see Proclus, *Procli Diadochi in Platonis Timaeum Commentaria*, Ernest Diehl (ed.), 3 vols., Lipsiae: Teubner, vol III, 1906, p. 294: 22-295:14.

³⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, Ch. III, p. 117 (Greek); p. 118 (Latin translation O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164); see also Proclus, "*Timée*", vol V, 1968, p. 172, 294: 22-295:14. For the Greek see Proclus, *Commentaria*, , vol III, 1906, p. 294: 22-295:14.

³¹ Pseudo John the Faster, 'Ἀκολουθία καὶ τάξις', *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeco-Latina* ed. J-P. Migne, Paris: Petit-Montrouge, vol. 88, 1860 col. 1904.

³² P. Gautier, 'Le Chartophylax Nicéphore: Oeuvre canonique et notice biographique', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 27 (1969), 174-5.

³³ See for example Βουλῆς βιβλιοθήκη ms no. 83, f 46.

detailed information is provided on her. The iconoclastic debate, with its focus on the relationship between the human and divine natures of Christ and consequently their corporeal and spiritual characteristics provided such a climate. Writers saw in the *gello* a polemical tool: the possibility of a human becoming a *gello* touched on the issue of the characteristics of corporeal and spiritual beings and thus was drawn into the debate. This is the context for the episode concerning the *gello* which appears in Ignatios' *Life of the Patriarch Tarasios* and is excerpted by Allatios. The chief protagonist is not Tarasios, but his father George, an iconophile, who served the iconoclast emperors Leo III (717-741) and Constantine V (741-775). Several women had been brought before George's court accused of being *gelloudes* and killing children in the guise of spirits. George acquitted these women, arguing that a body could not be 'dissolved' into a spirit, that is, a human being could not become a *gello* or any other kind of demon.³⁴ He arrived at his decision after a consideration of the relationship between Christ's divine and human natures. Even Christ, when he appeared after his death, was not purely spirit. Christ's human nature continued to co-exist with his divine one: Thomas could touch him and place his hand in the wounds.³⁵

The story about the *gello* is included in the *Life* of the Patriarch Tarasios to drive home a point about iconoclasm. Ignatios is trying to establish the 'pedigree' of the future iconophile patriarch, Tarasios, through a tale which demonstrates the iconodule credentials of his father. George's iconophile reasoning is implicit in his judgement. Iconophiles and iconoclasts disagreed about the nature of Christ after the resurrection. While the iconophiles argued that Christ's human nature remained intact, the iconoclasts believed that Christ was now purely divine and of spiritual

³⁴ Efthymiadis, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172.

³⁵ The iconophile angle to the argument is confirmed by George's use of the quotation '*truth is a spirit, which has no flesh and bones*' which alludes to an iconophile argument in the writings of Theodore the Studite. Efthymiadis, *Tarasios*, p. 211. See also John of Damascus, 'Περὶ στριγγῶν', col. 1604, where again the *gello* is drawn into the iconoclast dispute. Although this text may not have been written by John of Damascus, again it shows the involvement of popular beliefs in doctrinal disputes. On the authorship of this text, see the notes by Jean Gouillard in Paul Lemerle, *Prolégomènes à une édition critique et commentée des «conseils et récits» de Kékauménos*, Bruxelles: Académie royale de Belgique, 1960, pp. 109-113.

substance. His body had 'dissolved' into spirit alone.³⁶ This, George implies, means that the iconoclasts must believe in such creatures as the *gello*. Indeed, George is hauled up in front of '*the ruler*', that is the iconoclast emperor, Constantine V (741-775), who, Ignatios writes, '*actually gave credence to these fantasies*.'³⁷ The tale associates the iconoclast position with a popular practice which theologians on both sides would reject. Thus Ignatios' account of the *gello* attempts to ridicule the iconoclast position by putting it on a level with popular practices and showing that it allows such absurdities as transformation between corporeal and spiritual natures.

This insult was magnified by the disdain with which certain sectors of Byzantine society viewed popular beliefs and their adherents. Allatios' dismissal of the *gello* exorcism as an 'absurdity' '*by which very silly men believe that they drive off dangers presented by little old women*' reflects this particular Byzantine attitude.³⁸ In order to discredit certain 'superstitious' beliefs early church fathers such as John Chrysostom and Gregory of Nyssa characterised them as the preserve of 'foolish old women', suggesting that only such people would believe this nonsense.³⁹ Balsamon, the twelfth-century canonist, also used the expression 'foolish old women' to undermine those involved in practices disapproved of by the church.⁴⁰ For the iconoclast emperor's enemies to imply that he adhered to such popular beliefs as the *gello* was a form of abuse, simultaneously undermining his theological position and characterising him as foolish and simple minded.

³⁶ This was important to the dispute over images because if Christ retained characteristics of his human nature after his resurrection, the iconophiles argued that he could be circumscribed by virtue of this and therefore depicted on icons. It is clear that this theological position is referred to because Ignatios writes '*When Christ said that "truth is a spirit, that has no flesh and bones", was He regarded as a ghost by those who could certify this? Yet truly Christ Himself who assumed true flesh and verily confirmed to his disciples that the spirit has no flesh and bones, cannot be described as a phantom with no substance. Having thus judged and made a fearless decision, George acquitted the women of these charges.*' See Efthymiadis, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172.

³⁷ Efthymiadis, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, pp. 172-73.

³⁸ Allatios, *De opin.*, Ch. VII p. 136.

³⁹ Matthew W. Dickie, 'Fathers of the Church and the Evil Eye', in Henry Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*, Washington D.C: Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 19, esp. n. 32.

⁴⁰ Marie Theres Fögen, 'Balsamon on Magic: From Roman Secular Law to Byzantine Canon Law' in Henry Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*, Washington D.C: Harvard University Press, 1995, p. 107.

The information from Ignatios' text is also extremely useful for revealing the hidden interaction between the laity and the civil courts on the subject of the *gello*. The account provides information, not only about the *gello*, but also about the social interactions surrounding the accusation, and importantly, the interactions between the laity and church in this matter. The laity take their dispute, centring round a popular belief, to a civil court. During the eighth century the civil courts rather than the ecclesiastical ones heard cases of this kind. These women were being accused of murder which they were supposed to have carried out in demonic form. The passage therefore reveals the way in which the structures of the state were employed to deal with an issue arising out of an outlawed popular belief, which was rejected by the church.⁴¹ It suggests, moreover, that there was more activity surrounding these beliefs than the sources reveal.

Protection against the *gello*

Unsurprisingly, the church, which denied the existence of the *gello* and castigated those who believed in her, did not supply any protective measures specifically directed against her. Even the exorcism, although it required a priest to carry it out, was not recognised by the higher ecclesiastical authorities, nor was it included in official works of church rites such as the *Euchologion* edited by Jacques Goar.⁴² This did not imply, however, that the church failed altogether to provide solace for those threatened by the appetite of the *gello* for new-born children. Although the church did not approve any of the rites directed specifically against the *gello*, the laity appropriated certain ecclesiastical practices for this purpose. Some church rites and symbols were believed to have a general effect against all evil forces. Allatios noted that some people '*conduct themselves more piously since they place the cross of the*

⁴¹ Paul Speck, "Die Ursprünge der byzantinischen Renaissance" in *The 17th International Byzantine Congress, Major Papers*. Dumbarton Oaks University Washington, D.C., August 3-8, 1986. New Rochelle, New York: A.D. Caratzas, 1986, pp. 557-8, argues that this story was made up by Ignatios. The *gello* and the Patriarch Tarasios, however, are connected in the exorcism text below, p. 69. Tarasios is one of the saints appealed to in the rite. This suggests that there may be some truth in the account. Nevertheless, even if it is fabricated, it is still relevant for our purposes: it shows how popular beliefs can be drawn into a dispute to characterise the opposing side, and, even if the court account is not literally true, it must at least be feasible for Ignatios to have included it.

⁴² Jacques Goar, *Euchologion Sive Rituale Graecorum*, Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1960 (reprint of 2nd edition of Bartholomaeus Javarina published in Venice, 1730).

*Lord or his image near to the child.*⁴³ These symbols of the power of Christianity scared away the demons. Some also used ‘*lamps lit before sacred images, which also light up the whole bedchamber: censuring the bed chamber.*’⁴⁴ Again, both these actions were thought to drive out evil spirits and sanctify the area. In the eyes of the laity therefore the church did have power against the *gello*, and of all its rites the most effective was baptism. Allatios writes in despair, ‘*I have often wondered why the Greeks delay [baptism] until the eighth day, when they consider the waters of baptism a sovereign remedy against this evil.*’⁴⁵ Initiating the child into the community of the church meant that it was sheltered by the power of Christ, and demons no longer possessed the same ability to harm the child. As well as providing this general protection, Allatios makes it clear that baptism was considered a treatment specifically directed against the *gello*. Therefore, although the church provided no official protection, the laity, and some members of the clergy, perceived the power of the church as effective in this matter. Despite disapproving of the belief in the *gello*, the church was unable to prevent its practice and rites from becoming an essential part of popular apotropaic strategies.

Other methods employed to ward off the *gello* met with less approval from Allatios. He states scornfully that ‘*some attach a head of garlic to cots, which they judged to be a remedy against poisonings; others [use] red coral and other things which I need not itemise individually.*’⁴⁶ The Orthodox church too objected to the practice of making amulets. It castigated those who carried phylacteries made from herbs or from thread or paper with written symbols, or characters, or pentalphas which were considered by the laity to be strong and effective magical symbols.⁴⁷ Whereas icons and symbols of the cross were acceptable because the church saw their efficacy as deriving from God, the amulets were not, because in this case it was the object itself

⁴³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, p. 118.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid, ch. II, p. 116.

⁴⁶ Ibid, ch. IV, p. 118.

⁴⁷ N. G. Politis, ‘*Ἐν κεφάλαιον νομοκάνονος περὶ γοητειῶν, μαντειῶν καὶ δεσιδαίμονιων*’, *Λαογραφία* 3 (1911), 387. Cf. also Βουλῆς βιβλιοθήκη no. 83, f 46.

which was deemed to be powerful. Use of these talismans denied the omnipotence of God, acknowledging alternative and independent sources of power in the world.

Those who employed these methods against the *gello* saw no contradiction in using both amulets and Christian rites in their struggle against the demon. That Christian rituals were considered to be compatible with other methods can be seen most clearly in the exorcism rite of the *gello*. This, like baptism, utilises the authority inherent in an ecclesiastical rite. A priest was required to perform it, and, in its purest form, the rite required that those demanding the exorcism had been baptised.⁴⁸ The exorcism rite proper comes in the second part of the text, following Sisinnios' and Synodoros' victory over the *gello*. Melitene's child is returned to her through the effort of the saints who also make protection available to all parents. The exorcism proper also harnesses the support of saints and the Virgin Mary against the *gello* to ensure that she keeps her promise not to molest the families of those performing the exorcism. This protection is requested in the form of a prayer.

'Therefore, I pray, my Lady, for your swiftest aid, so that the children of these your servants N and N may grow up, and that they may live and give thanks in the sight of the Lord for all the days of their lives. Thus let it be, my Lady.'

*Listen to me, a sinner and unworthy servant and although I am a sinner, do not despise my poor and miserable prayer but protect the children of your servants and let them live and send the Angel of Light so that he may protect and defend them from all evil, from wicked spirits, and from fiends which are in the air, and not let them be singled out by other [demons] and by the accursed gylo lest harm comes to them and to their children.'*⁴⁹

The prayer requests angelic protection and the aid of the Virgin Mary to ward off the *gello*. The two names of the parents, for whom the exorcism is said, are inserted, directing the attention of the heavenly hosts to their need.

⁴⁸ Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', 20.

⁴⁹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VII, p. 132.

However, the text also admits other sources of power. The *gello*, recognising she is beaten, pleads,

*“I beseech you, saints of God, do not vex me any longer, and wherever this talisman may lie, I shall not enter, and when it is on a bed, I shall not enter but flee, and I shall hurry sixty stades away. If anyone writes my twelve names, I shall not damage nor attack their house, nor shall I destroy their animals, and I shall not have power over their limbs.”*⁵⁰

The power to keep the *gello* away inheres in a material object, the talisman. At this point one manuscript inserts a series of symbols, presumably the magic talismans that the church objected to in the *nomokanones*.⁵¹ Additionally, the names are also a source of power. They differ in each version but strangely in the second version of Allatios they have been omitted.⁵² However, Allatios’ first text does contain a list of names. When the saints have captured the *gello* they torture her and demand that she puts an end to her persecution of Christians. She replies:

“If anyone is able to write my twelve and a half names I will not go into that church nor in the house of N the servant of God, who possesses [this talisman]; nor enter his wife, nor their sons, but I shall wander a long way off, 75 stades from the house.”

*Then the holy men said, “Tell us accursed gylo, your accursed names as quickly as possible, before we destroy you savagely”. And she said, “My first name is Gylo, my second Morrha, my third Byzo, my fourth Marmaro, my fifth Petasia, my sixth Pelagia, my seventh Bordona, my eighth Apleto, my ninth Chomodracaena, my tenth Anabardalea, my eleventh Psychoanaspastria, my twelfth Paedopnictria, the half Strigla.”*⁵³

The saints and humanity in general can exert power over the *gello*, through the possession of her names. The *gello* is aware of this and only reveals them when forced to do so by their beating: *‘The accursed gylo begged the saints, “Leave me alone, Sysinios and Synidoros, and so that you will not utterly kill me, I will tell you what must be done to prevent me entering that place.”’*⁵⁴ The reluctance to divulge

⁵⁰ Ibid, ch. VII, p. 134 (Greek); p. 136 (Latin translation).

⁵¹ National Library of Athens, no. 1265, f 58v.

⁵² For a comparison of the different lists of names for the *gello* cf Greenfield, ‘Gylou’, 124-138.

⁵³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VII, p. 131. On the meanings of these names see Paul Perdrizet, *Negotium Perambulans in Tenebris*, Strasbourg: Faculté des Lettres de l’Université de Strasbourg, 1922, p. 21-23.

⁵⁴ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VII, p. 127 (Greek); p. 131 (Latin translation).

a name is a general characteristic of the demons because of the power it gives to the possessor. This can be seen most clearly in the text of the *Testament of Solomon* where a demon protests, '*If I tell you my names I will not only bind myself, but the legion of demons under me as well*'.⁵⁵

It is significant that here, and in the *gello* exorcism, the demons are forced to divulge their names themselves. In doing so they are not only providing the names, but also acknowledging the relationship between the name and their identity. In the exorcism discussed by Delatte the demons pretend that they are not touched by the exorcism because the exorcist had not cited their name.⁵⁶ The name provides a point of contact, and so a gate way to the other being: verbal, like physical, contact can exert a great force. This is also apparent from examples relating to other *exotika*. The *vrikolakas*, or revenant, calls out the names of men and if a '*man replies, it means that he is done for, and will die the next day. If he does not reply, he is safe*'.⁵⁷ The acknowledgement of the name allows the *vrikolakas* to establish contact, which enables it to kill the man. If this contact is not made, the man escapes, even though the *vrikolakas* knows his name. Thus the *gello*'s acknowledgement of her names is vital to the tale, for it is that which gives power to those possessing them.

On a human level naming helps to identify the threat, confers knowledge about it and makes the task of combating it more manageable. Thus it enabled people to classify and label the immense demonic forces ranged against them and made it possible to bring them within a human framework of knowledge. Stewart concludes from his work on modern Greece that '*the demons themselves tend towards entropy and indistinguishability. To succeed in naming them is to exert control over them*'.⁵⁸ The same principles can also be seen in the *gello* exorcism. The saints are beseeched to protect the servant of God '*from the host of undifferentiated demons and from the execrable gylo*', who herself possessed the name '*Apleto*' meaning boundless or

⁵⁵ C. C. McCown, (ed.), *The Testament of Solomon*. Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 9. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1922, p. 107. Stewart, *Demons*, p. 284, note 5.

⁵⁶ Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 120. See also ff. 42v, 63, 67v, 90, 90v.

⁵⁷ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XII, p. 142.

⁵⁸ Stewart, *Demons*, p. 215.

limitless.⁵⁹ Moreover, names not only separate out the demon or disease from the undifferentiated mass, but also can verify the individual's experience and present the threat in a manageable form. The very process of identification implies the possession of some knowledge about the subject. In the case of human names, the names themselves provide this information. The surname, and often the first name, ties the individual to a family group. In the past it might also have indicated the area of origin or profession. Formal names help to place the individual within a social structure; nicknames on the other hand, can reveal aspects of the personality.⁶⁰ Most names impart information of some kind. This is equally true for demons. They are often identified by the effect they have on the person: for instance, demons are referred to as 'deaf' or 'mute', or perhaps by their number, such as the biblical demon called 'Legion'.⁶¹ This is also the case with many of the names of the *gello* which impart information about her origins and her behaviour.⁶² Each name describes a different aspect of the demon. She is called *Anapletos* or 'innumerable' or 'boundless', a typical characteristic of demons. '*Paedopniktria*' describes her behaviour-'child suffocator', as does '*Petasia*', 'she who strikes'. Her origins or place of abode are given in '*Byzo*', a contraction of *Abyzou*, which Barb traces to '*abyssos*', the abyss. It was often used to denote the deep, wild sea, closely associated with demons.⁶³ '*Pelagia*' also conveys this information.⁶⁴ The *gello* herself flees to the sea and in the second text of Allatios she is captured by the seashore.⁶⁵ She also heads for the sea in the first text and the saints are told by the olive tree: '*Saints of God, continue your journey as quickly as possible, for she is approaching the sea shore.*'⁶⁶ It is implied that the saints must catch her before she

⁵⁹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VII, p. 136.

⁶⁰ For a discussion of naming patterns in seventeenth-century Naxos see Aglaia E. Kasdagli, 'Gender Differentiation and Social Practice in Post-Byzantine Naxos', in John J. Yiannias (ed.), *The Byzantine Tradition After the Fall of Constantinople*, London: University of Virginia Press, 1991, p. 69 ff.; and for modern day Naxos: Charles Stewart, 'The Role of Personal Names on Naxos (Greece)', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 19 (1988), 151-59.

⁶¹ Luke 8:30

⁶² Delatte, 'Contribution', 232 places the *gello* in a class of demons which owes its name to its functions and activities.

⁶³ Barb, 'Antaura', 5, n. 44. Perdrizet, *Negotium perambulans in tenebris*, p. 22

⁶⁴ Barb, 'Antaura', 17.

⁶⁵ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VII, p. 136.

⁶⁶ Ibid, ch. VII, p. 130.

arrives at the water. This is supported by Greenfield's note that the *gello* and other female demons have an affinity with water.⁶⁷ Names therefore are closely associated with the person or object named and the Greek term '*onoma*' (name) also implies this, as it refers to the whole person and not the name alone.⁶⁸

The act of naming inevitably carries with it a process of individuation and separation. Names separate people, objects and concepts from an undifferentiated mass, creating boundaries between the thing named and its surroundings. What is named is finite and discrete. This has implications for the exorcism rite of the *gello*. When the *gello* is banished, for example, all the places from which she is to leave are listed. In Allatios' first text, the *gello* promises she will not enter the church, nor the house, nor the wife, nor the children of the person who possesses the prayer.⁶⁹ Each of these is marked off, as if in a contractual agreement. In the text above the animals and limbs of the servant of God are also included.⁷⁰ It is feared that any place not listed is still open to attack. The times of day are also marked off in this way. She may not attack during the night, nor during the day; during the middle of the night, or during the middle of the day. The same principle comes into force when it comes to the names of the *gello*. Each name defines a particular aspect of her character and all these aspects must be labelled otherwise the *gello* will not be fully exorcised.⁷¹ The catalogue of names represents an attempt to provide an exorcism that totally and effectively exerts power over the *gello*.

Just as the names themselves are imbued with a magical force, so too is the number of the names. The *gello* in Allatios' texts cites twelve or twelve and a half as the number of her names. The number twelve is a significant number in Christianity, relating to the twelve apostles and the twelve tribes of Israel which constituted the chosen people, a mantle the Christians claimed following the resurrection. In other

⁶⁷ Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 185.

⁶⁸ Perdrizet, *Negotium perambulans in tenebris*, p. 22.

⁶⁹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VII, p. 131.

⁷⁰ Ibid, ch. VII, p. 136.

⁷¹ Delatte, 'Contribution', 232 argues that a form of the plural '*αἱ γελλοῦδες*' can be explained by the number of hypostases of the *gello* symbolised by the different names.

places the *gello* claims to have seventy-two names. The number seventy-two, Spyridakis suggests, represents the total number of tribes or peoples present on the earth. When the *gello* is cast out using her seventy-two names, this signifies enforced exile from the peoples of the earth.⁷² Similarly, exorcism using her twelve names implies banishment from the new chosen people, that is, Christians. This is signified in some exorcisms by her expulsion to the margins of the earth: In one exorcism she is sent ‘*across the earth, beyond the mountains*’.⁷³ Mountains and seas, and other inhabited areas were associated with the boundaries of civilisation.⁷⁴ Finally, the half name too has a magical significance, the fraction making the number of names as precise as possible.⁷⁵ Thus the number of the names provided is extremely important and adds to the efficacy of the exorcism.

The power of names is also called upon in the final prayer where a list of saints is called upon to adjure the *gello*.

*‘I adjure you, through the name of God, which the rock heard and split.’⁷⁶
 God of Saint Mamantis, Saint Polycarp, Saint Tarasios, Saint Domitios,
 the Saint and Martyr Panteleemon, and Hermolas, Saint and Martyr
 Nicetas, Saint Babylas, Saint Porphyrios, Saint Blasios, Saint Eulogios,
 Saint Nicholas, Saint Basil, Saint John Chrysostomos, Saint Leo, Saint
 Eleutherios, Saint Demetrios, Saint George, Saint Theodore, Saint James
 of Persia, Saint John the Prophet, Precursor and Baptist; of Saint John
 the Theologian, Saint Orestes, Saint Andrew, the 318 Saints of the
 Fathers, the Doctor Saints Cosmas and Damian, Saint Epiphanius, Saint
 Irenarchos, Saint and Martyr, Auxentios, Eugenios, Orestes, Mardarios,
 and Lucia the Virgin and the Holy Martyrs, Pegasios, Aphthonios,
 Elpidiphoros, and Anempodistos, of our very praiseworthy Lady Mother
 of God and always Virgin Mary, and all the saints. Amen.’⁷⁷*

⁷² G. K. Spyridakis, ‘Ο ἀριθμὸς ἑβδομήκοντα δύο’, in *Ἀφείρωμα εἰς Κ. Ι. Ἀμαντον ἐξέδοθη ἀπὸ τοῦ Μαθητᾶς τοῦ*, Athens: K. L. Kyriakoulis, 1940, pp. 409-18.

⁷³ Provatakis, ‘Τὸ “Πεδουλοχάρτι”’, p. 122.

⁷⁴ Stewart, *Demons*, pp. 169-170.

⁷⁵ Fritz Pradel, *Griechische und süditalienische Gebete, Beschwörungen und Rezepte des Mittelalters*. Giessen: A. Töpelmann, 1907, p. 73; 78. See also Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 104, where not only whole demons, but also fractions are invoked.

⁷⁶ Jeremiah 11:16, ‘Are [my words] not like a hammer that splinters rock?’

⁷⁷ Allatius, *De opin.*, ch. VII, p. 136.

This prayer appears to take the form of a request. The afflicted individual implores the saints to come to his aid against the demonic power of the *gello*. However, the very first sentence states the formidable power pronouncing a holy name could unleash: the rock split at the mere mention of the name of God. The particular saints included in each list varies, including saints of local significance. They were also chosen for their expertise, for not all saints possessed the ability to pursue and dominate demons.⁷⁸ For some, however, this became a speciality: Auxentios was a renowned eater of demons, and Saint Marina was known for her aquatic struggle with the devil, particularly relevant given the affinity of the *gello* to water. A number are doctor saints, relevant because of the association of the *gello* with certain childhood sicknesses, and particular attention should be drawn to the presence St Eleutherios who was traditionally called on for safe childbirth.⁷⁹ The soldier saints, Christ's warriors are familiar figures in the list of saints called upon, and are often depicted fighting a dragon, a symbol of diabolic power.⁸⁰ It is also extremely interesting, given the appearance of the *gello* in the context of Iconoclasm, that there are a number of iconophile and Chalcedonian saints included in the list, in particular the Patriarch Tarasios.⁸¹

The naming of saints served another purpose as well as selecting and identifying those who were suitable for the job. It was an attempt not merely to request their aid but to compel them to give it. By calling the names the individual was ordering, summoning forth the ranks against the demonic threat. This, of course, is completely

⁷⁸ Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 121, where he states that different angels have the power over different demons. See also McCown, *Testament*, 8:3-10, pp. 32-33; Michael Psellos, *Démonologie populaire - démonologie critique au XI siècle: La Vie inédite de S. Auxence*, (ed.) P.-P Joannou, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1971, p. 22.

⁷⁹ Amongst the doctor saints in this list are Cosmas and Damian, St Blasios, St Panteleemon, St Hermolaos

⁸⁰ E.g. St Theodore the Recruit, St George, St James the Persian.

⁸¹ St Tarasios, St Leo, St Auxentios, St Eulogios. It was the Council of Chalcedon that laid down the doctrine of the hypostatic union of Christ's human and divine natures. Christ was both God and man; the divine word incarnate and the humanity of Christ were both central to the achievement of the resurrection. It is significant that the passage in Luke 24:39 ('Look at my hands and feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see; no ghost has flesh and bones as you can see that I have.') used in the Tome of Pope Leo I (440-61) to demonstrate the continuing humanity of Christ after the resurrection, also occurs in these texts concerning the nature of the *gello*. It was to this passage that Ignatios refers when he said 'truth is a spirit that has no flesh and bones' See Efthymiadis, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172.

at odds with the official approach. It would be strange, however, if the underlying power of the lists of names was not also understood as playing a role in persuading the saints to join forces against the *gello*. Attempts to compel saints and the Virgin Mary to provide aid occurred frequently in medieval Greece. A late seventeenth-century traveller describes how the Chiotese dealt with their saints. Sometimes the miracle working icon of St Anthony of Padua, which was situated in the chapel at Nea Moni, was sullen and did not supply the miracles the parishioners requested but *'a few sharp lashes about the shoulders usually cures him of the spleen. But when the distemper is very stubborn and the dose of the whip proves ineffectual, they either turn him out of this lodging, and make him lie abroad in the wind and rain or dip him ten or twelve times in water with a great stone at his neck which always produces the desired effect.'*⁸² This reveals the lengths to which the parishioners had to go to encourage the saint to do their will. This tale testifies to the fact that, if the saint was not obliging, the worshippers would turn to alternative methods to compel the saint to do their will.

Despite the deliberate omission of any rite against the *gello* in the tomes of the official church, ecclesiastical ceremonies were interpreted as efficacious against the *gello* as a force of evil. Baptism in particular was seen as providing refuge against the *gello* because of its ability to extend the protection of Christ and his church but the power inherent in the ecclesiastical rite of exorcism was also appropriated. Those who faced the threat of the *gello* saw no contradiction in using both Christian ecclesiastical rites and talismans which were outlawed by the church. Moreover, the faithful displayed the same attitude in their approach to aspects of faith accepted by formal orthodoxy as they did in those features which were not so acceptable. The saints, like the demons, often had to be compelled to do their will. In employing protection against the *gello*, as in the comprehension of its nature, the popular ideas were not restricted by the conceptions of the official church.

⁸² Jean du Mont, *A New Voyage to the Levant: Containing an Account of the Most Remarkable Curiosities in Germany, France, Italy, Malta and Turkey*, London, printed for T. Goodwin, M. Wolton and B. Took, 1702, p. 189.

Thus Allatios' sources reveal the way in which the *gello* fitted into the Greek popular beliefs. His selection also touches on the relevance of the *gello* for Iconoclasm, an ecclesiastical dispute which had at its centre the question of the relationship between body and spirit. Allatios, treats the attribution of the deed of the *gello* to 'little old women' as an absurdity.⁸³ Indeed, the Catholic West, like the iconophiles in the East, held firmly to the Chalcedonian position on the natures of Christ. This position outlawed the *gello* because it insisted that human nature could not be dissolved into a spiritual nature. Allatios thus acts like a good ecumenicist in selecting texts which follow the iconophile interpretation. This ecumenical concern which is only hinted at here becomes clearer in the next chapter when Allatios' comments on the relationship between baptism and the *gello* are investigated.

⁸³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VII, p. 136.

The Gello and Baptism

Birth in the seventeenth century was an extremely risky procedure in both East and West. Although there are no statistics, death in childbirth was far more common than today, for both mother and child, and the mortality rates for young children were much higher.¹ Women often had to give birth in very harsh circumstances. Randolph, who travelled through the East in 1670 describes how a pregnant woman went out to the fields with one child in the morning, returning in the evening with two, having given birth during the day.² The dangers of the process of giving birth are also apparent in the work of Sonnini, an eighteenth-century traveller with a particular interest in medical practices. He describes a birth scene and the precautions that followed it. As soon as the woman felt the labour pains the midwife attending pressed down hard on her stomach until the pain passed and the woman began to walk up and down the room again. At the moment of birth the woman was placed on a birthing stool. When the child had appeared and had been separated from the afterbirth the woman was bumped up and down on the chair until her delivery was complete. After this she was bandaged morning and night with cloths soaked in spices and alcohol. These bandages were wrapped from just below the breast to the top of the pelvic bones.³ Sonnini was highly critical of the procedures in accordance with the western medical practices of the time. The agitation of the woman on the birthing stool, presumably to aid the expulsion of the after birth would increase the bleeding and was extremely dangerous. He was equally critical of the binding of the mother, which, according to his sources, would lead to inflammation of the womb.

¹ Angeliki E. Laiou, "The Role of Women in Byzantine Society", *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 31 (1991), 236, assumes that only of 50% of peasant children survived the first five years of life; Thomas Munck, *Seventeenth-Century Europe: State Conflict and the Social Order in Europe 1598-1700*, London: Macmillan, 1992, p.100 relates that in France during the early modern period a quarter of all children died before their fifth birthday.

² Bernard Randolph, *The Present State of the Islands in the Archipelago, Sea of Constantinople and the Gulf of Smyrna. With the Islands of Candia and Rhodes. Faithfully described by Bernard Randolph*, Oxford, Printed at the Theater, 1687, pp. 41-42.

³ Charles-Nicolas Sigisbert Sonnini de Manoncourt, *Voyage in Grèce et en Turquie fait par Ordre de Louis XVI et avec l'Autorisation de la Cour Ottomane*, 2 vols., Paris for F. Bilisson, IX <1801>, vol. 2, pp. 83-95.

This perilous process provides the context for the *gello*. The *gello* attacks in the period surrounding of birth: the sources identify newly-born children as particularly at risk from her activities. Many modern writers have put forward the view that the *gello* is used as an explanation of the death of new-born babies - it is the demon of cot deaths.⁴ There is, of course, some truth in this explanation. Without the high mortality rate there would be no need to use the *gello* to explain it and, consequently, in modern times instances of this demon have declined; but it does not tell the whole story. Popular beliefs do not exist in a vacuum. They are part of a system of ideas with which people think about the world. Developments in concepts and practices in other areas of life can have an impact upon these beliefs and mould the form they take. Just as theological concepts can limit or mould a belief, so ideas surrounding other areas of life can touch upon ideas about demons. The *gello* is one element of the network of beliefs and practices surrounding the process of birth, which was directed towards integrating the mother and new-born child into human society and facilitating their future health and happiness. Baptism in particular, the Christian rite of initiation, enacted the introduction of the child into both the heavenly and the earthly community. Allatios notes the close relationship which exists between the popular understanding of the *gello* and baptism. In fact, Allatios reveals that it was the most effective protection against the demon, giving the most fundamental of sacraments a place in popular practices. Whilst the natural birth begins the period of danger for the child and mother, baptism brings this period to a close. Thus ideas concerning childbirth and the physical and religious entrance of the child into the community are extremely important for understanding the *gello*.

⁴ Greenfield, 'Gylou', 124. See also p. 140: 'The Gylou story emerges here as a kind of 'psycho-drama', a means of visualising and of portraying in graphic form, a particular type of affliction: that involving illness or death during pregnancy, childbirth and infancy. By clothing this abstract affliction in the personal form of a malevolent female demon and by describing in various ways her defeat, capture, humiliation and/or banishment from the community at the hands of a more powerful archangel or saint, these stories offer a means of coming to terms with a serious social problem. In the absence of modern medical knowledge and practice, the exorcisms or amulets for which the Gylou stories provide a basis and of which they form a part thus offer people faced by an otherwise baffling and inexplicable crisis some psychological and spiritual, if probably not practical, assistance in dealing with it.'

The gello and the power of baptism

Through baptism, God's power to guide and protect is extended over the child. This process begins on the day of birth, even before the baptism itself. The prayer on the first day of the child's life requests: '*Grant that the child that hath been born of her may do reverence to the earthly temple which thou hast prepared to glorify thy holy Name.*'⁵ The emphasis continues in the ceremony of baptism itself. A prayer at the start of the ceremony states the protection that the baptizand might expect to receive from God. The priest says: '*I lay my hand upon thy servant, N who hath been found worthy to flee unto thy holy Name, and to take refuge under the shelter of thy wings.*'⁶ This protection depends on the child's introduction to God and initiation into the community. The earlier prayers look forward to baptism and the commencement of the child's participation in worship. They also bring the protection of Christ over the child, although this is only achieved in its fullest extent once the group of rites has been completed.⁷

Baptism therefore is of significance to the community, which receives a new member, as well as to the baptizand. The position of the child with respect to the community, which after all is the church in its broadest sense, and with respect to Christ is illustrated by its physical proximity to the altar. As the child moves towards baptism it also moves closer to the sanctuary, the holiest place in the church. At birth the prayers for the child are said at the home. On the eighth day the child is brought to the door of the church and sealed with a cross. On the fortieth day before baptism takes place, the child is exorcised at the door of the church, before he is carried across the threshold.

This progress of the child, both into the community of the church and towards Christ, is most clearly expressed in the rite of the churching of the child, which follows

⁵ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; translation from Isabel F. Hapgood, *Service Book of the Holy Orthodox-Catholic Apostolic Church*, New York: Association Press, 1922, p. 266.

⁶ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; translation Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 261.

⁷ Stewart, *Demons*, p. 151, in his study of modern Greece argues that baptism is particularly effective against the *exotika* and that those who had not been baptised 'properly' were more likely to see them or be attacked by them.

baptism. The priest, carrying the infant, begins at the door of the church, then crosses the threshold, after which he moves into the middle of the church. From there he carries the child to the door of the sanctuary. Finally, if the child is a boy he is carried into the sanctuary itself, but if a girl only as far as the holy door. At each stage the priest pronounces the words, '*The servant of God is churchd. In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*'⁸

The ceremony of baptism also brings the child under the protection of God. Before the ceremony starts the child is sealed with a cross. The importance of the seal, which can be explained as a 'badge of ownership',⁹ is clear in the rites of exorcism. It marks candidates out as '*newly sealed, newly chosen soldiers of Christ our God*', '*those who are being prepared for the holy illumination*'. These phrases state to the evil powers that the baptizand belongs to God. Moreover, it is on baptism that all the subsequent sacraments stand: the other sacraments are only open to those who have been baptised.

Popular beliefs and rituals also recognise the important initiatory role of baptism. Some exorcism rites contain the proviso that they will only be effective for those included within the Christian sphere. The popular exorcisms are firmly located within a Christian context. The exorcisms of the *gello* stress the Christian nature of the family and the saints order the *gello* to '*put an end... to the killing of infants of Christians*'.¹⁰ It is only Christians who are protected by the exorcism. The parents of the child are also referred to consistently as '*servants of God*'. Baptism with its surrounding rites is the entrance and base of Christian life, and all subsequent powers and rites depend upon it.

Certain elements within baptism also give it a special force against demons and evil spirits. Three exorcisms are included within the ceremony. These stress the power of God against the devil and his demons. The first exorcism is directed against the

⁸ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; translation Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 270.

⁹ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 271; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 270; Henry Asgard Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology and Drama*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985 p. 165.

¹⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VII, p. 130.

devil and requests '*may the Lord rebuke you, devil, who came into the world, and dwelled among men in order to liberate them by the removal of your tyranny.*'¹¹ In this exorcism, death is equated with the tyranny of the devil and reveals how Christ's death on the Cross vanquishes both. This historic victory (although in a sense the victory over death is re-enacted with each baptism), reveals the power of God in the present. God is able to exercise this power through his church, which enables the priest to exorcise the devil from the catechumen. Reminding the devil of the power of Christ, the priest forbids him from approaching at any hour of the day and commands him to depart from the '*newly sealed, newly chosen soldiers of our God*'.¹² This exorcism depends upon the earlier rites, for the candidate is recognised as already marked out and sealed.

The second exorcism builds upon the first and widens its target, calling upon both the devil and all his assisting powers to leave the baptizand. A parallel is drawn between Christ's expulsion of demons into the Gadarene swine and the priest's expulsion through Christ of the devil in the present.¹³ The devil himself is identified with the demons in the swine, and so Christ's irresistible power over demons in both the past and present is stressed. Then the power of Christ and God is called upon once again and all are reminded of the imminent punishment of the devil. The third exorcism broadens its scope once again, asking Christ to '*seek for, search out and drive from them all the operations of the devil. Rebuke the evil and unclean spirits and cast them out*'.¹⁴ Demons that cause illnesses are included in this list for God is referred to as '*healer of every disease and every illness.*'¹⁵ Finally, the exorcisms are brought to a close with a prayer in which reference is made to future protection from attacks of the devil: '*Join to his life a shining angel to deliver him from every snare of the adversary, from the onslaught of evil, from the noonday demon, from evil phantasms.*'¹⁶

¹¹ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 276; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 273; Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 164.

¹² Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 276; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 273; Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 164.

¹³ Matt. 8:28-32.

¹⁴ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 277; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 273; Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 166.

¹⁵ Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 166.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 166.

In using baptism to ward off the *gello*, the laity are accessing the power of the church to deal with a problem in everyday life. The exorcism rite indicates that the *gello* is perceived as an evil demon opposed to God, to be combated by his forces. In common with baptismal exorcisms, the *gello* exorcisms include general statements about the power of God over his opponents, and the two also share certain features which would allow baptism to be incorporated within the set of popular strategies dealing with the demon. The baptismal exorcisms reveal the danger posed by demons to the non-baptised who lie outside God's protection, indicating the particular vulnerability of the new-born child. At the same time, they stress the power of God against all unclean spirits. The exorcisms of baptism are not directed specifically against the *gello*, but state that they have power over every 'impure spirit', 'ἀκάθαρτον πνεύμα'. The *gello* too is referred to as 'ἀκάθαρτον πνεύμα' in the exorcism, and so, by implication, is included in the forces banished by the baptismal rite.¹⁷

The baptismal and *gello* exorcisms also share certain ideas about demons. In the baptismal exorcism, like the exorcism of the *gello*, certain areas of the earth are considered to be dwelling places for demons and both texts expel them to the margins of the world. The baptismal exorcism like the exorcism of the *gello* also recognises marginal areas as dwelling places for the banished demons. In both texts certain parts of the day are viewed as especially threatening: the demons of midday and midnight are mentioned. Moreover, they both recognise the power of angels to guide and protect from demons. The baptismal rite asks that a 'shining angel' be provided to guide the convert in his new life while the *gello* exorcism also requests God to send a 'shining angel' to protect and defend the children from all evil.¹⁸ Finally, the emphasis on the universal power of Christ over the devil and demons make it clear how baptism came to be seen by the laity as a remedy for the *gello*. The *gello* was an evil power and therefore associated with the devil. As such, baptism

¹⁷ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VII p. 133.

¹⁸ Ibid, ch. VII p. 132. Often in exorcism texts particular angels are assigned power over individual demons. See McCown, *Testament*, 8:3-10, pp. 32-33.

had great power over her. Moreover, baptism stresses not just the initial protection against demons, but a continuing protection under the auspices of the all powerful God. From baptism onwards the child is included within the Christian community and within a network of supernatural alliances.

Allatios' understanding of the relationship between the *gello* and baptism

Given the vulnerability of the newly-born to these evil forces and the blanket of protection afforded by baptism, Allatios' surprise at the delay of baptism seems appropriate. Whereas in the Catholic church baptism took place as soon as possible after birth, Allatios notes that in the Orthodox church there was a deliberate delay of eight days before the ceremony. His observation is supported by the reports of numerous travellers to the East. The Anglican chaplain Thomas Smith writes '*seldom does baptism take place before the eighth or ninth day except in the case of illness.*'¹⁹ The observant botanist Tournefort and the sympathetic English consul Rycaut concur.²⁰ However, if Allatios was shocked by this delay of eight days, he would have deplored even more the delay until the fortieth day described by Georgirenes, bishop of Samos who records that '*Children ordinarily are not Baptiz'd till 40 days after Birth.*'²¹ Similarly, in the *Euchologion* of Goar it is assumed that the child will not be baptised until the fortieth day.²² The split between these two dates for baptism can also be seen throughout the Byzantine period and both are supported by a biblical precedent: the eighth day can be traced back to the circumcision and naming of Christ, whereas the fortieth coincides with the presentation of Christ at the temple.²³ The *Novels* of the Emperor Leo VI (886-912)

¹⁹ Smith, *Greek Church*, p. 109.

²⁰ Joseph Pitton de Tournefort, *A Voyage into the Levant: Perform'd by the Command of the Late French King*, translated from the French by John Ozell, London: printed for D. Browne, A. Bell etc., 1718, vol. 2, p. 26ff; Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 161.

²¹ Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 44.

²² It is clear from the rite in Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 268, that baptism was to follow the rite of churching on the fortieth day.

²³ Jane Baun, 'The Fate of Babies Dying Before Baptism in Byzantium', *Studies in Church History* 31 (1994), 117.

comment on the two days, preferring the fortieth day, but allowing the eighth as an alternative.²⁴

It should be remembered that the actual baptism is only part of a process which begins on the day of the birth and continues after the triple immersion of baptism with chrismation and the cutting of the hair. The acts as a whole are referred to in Greek by the verb ‘*φωτίζομαι*’ indicating a process of enlightenment as distinct from ‘*βαπτίζομαι*’, which refers to the rite of baptism itself. The set of rites, which extend from birth and continue after baptism, mark out a period of transformation and in the forty day scheme the eighth day retains its significance as the naming day.

Allatios’ comments on the delay of baptism seem very pertinent but, as with all of his interpretations, one must treat his statements carefully. Rather than accepting them at face value a deeper investigation is required to assess his understanding of the beliefs involved and the extent to which his analysis is coloured by his pre-existing viewpoint. Allatios’ remark suggests that the Greeks should move their baptism forward, closer to the time of birth, precisely because of its effectiveness against the *gello*. Their failure to do so he ascribes to an over-zealous attachment to tradition, which he regards as no good reason:

‘They prefer to spend long hours in vigils and manifest peril than to curtail the severity of the custom in the slightest. Thus do they love what is theirs! Although they have made almost innumerable changes to such strict observations, as they themselves publicly declare, they most unwisely neglect [to make a change which would be] so useful and convenient in the case of an evil that is so manifest.’²⁵

It is, however, the official church which lays down the proper time that baptism should take place, and, as discussed earlier, it castigates the laity for belief in the *gello*.²⁶ It is not the church which considers baptism efficacious against the dreadful *gello*, but the laity who have given a place to the ecclesiastical rite amongst their

²⁴ A. Dain, and P. Noailles (eds.), *Les nouvelles de Léon VI le Sage*, Paris: Société d’édition ‘Les Belles Lettres’, 1944, novel XVII p. 68. See also Jean Darrouzès, ‘Les Réponses de Nicolas III à l’Évêque de Zétounion’ in J. Chrysostomides (ed.), *Kathegetria: Essays Presented to Joan Hussey on her 80th Birthday*, Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1988, p. 337 where this prescription is repeated.

²⁵ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. II p. 116.

²⁶ Arabatzoglou, *Φωτίειος Βιβλιοθήκη*, p. 248. Cf also Βουλής βιβλιοθήκη ms. 83, f 46v; ‘Malaxos, ‘*Νομοκάνων*’, φε, p. 125.

many remedies. This being so, it is hardly surprising that the church shows no interest in moving the ceremony. Allatios has confused the lay and ecclesiastical beliefs surrounding the *gello*.

This might seem to be a harsh criticism of Allatios. After all, his statement is just a flippant comment at the end of a chapter; but it takes on new significance when placed in the context of the debate over baptism. The Orthodox and Catholics disagreed over the proper method of baptism: should the baptizand be totally immersed three times, as the Orthodox believed, or was the Catholic practice, where the candidate was sprinkled with water three times on the brow, sufficient. Although the dispute over the validity of Catholic and Orthodox baptism did not come to a head until the eighteenth century, already in the seventeenth there were reports of Greeks rebaptising Latins, and Latins rebaptising Greeks.²⁷ This was a serious dispute: if the baptism of the other party was not recognised, it also invalidated all the other sacraments which depended upon it.

Allatios was writing as a Roman Catholic and, as his other writings reveal, he was passionately interested in the relationship between the Catholic and Orthodox churches and was aware of the differences which existed between them.²⁸ Why then in his comment does he draw attention to the differences? Firstly, baptism is drawn into his discussion of the *gello* because it provides a remedy against her actions. It is also a specifically Christian remedy and stands out amongst the uses of various amulets and talismans, of which he disapproves. In this sense it sheds a positive light on Greek baptism. His comment indicates the power baptism was believed to have over the evil demons, a power which Allatios acknowledges because he urges the Greeks to bring the date forward. Far from dismissing the validity of Greek baptism, Allatios uses the comment to demonstrate its force.

²⁷ Ware, *Argenti*, p. 67 ff.

²⁸ See for example the discussion in Petrus Arcudius, *De concordia ecclesiae occidentalis et orientalis*, Lutetiae Parisiorum, apud Cramoisy, 1626, pp. 22-24. Allatios knew this work well and quotes from it in *De opin.*, ch. XXX, p. 181.

Secondly, Allatios is not drawing attention to the method by which baptism was performed, the issue which was dividing the two churches, but the day on which the ceremony should be carried out. Allatios saw all differences between the Orthodox and Catholic churches as arising out of divergences in custom or tradition, rather than doctrine and dogma.²⁹ Not everyone agreed, but all would allow that the date of baptism was a matter of custom rather than doctrine, and as such did not prevent the intercommunion of the two churches. Finally, in discussing the issue, Allatios selects the earlier date for Orthodox baptism: the eighth rather than the fortieth day after birth. He does not maximize the difference between the two churches. Nonetheless, he manages to reveal the problem which arises from the later date of Orthodox baptism, indicating that the Catholic model would be more efficacious. He uses the threat posed by the *gello* as an opportunity to reveal the shortcomings of the customs of Orthodox baptism, while at the same time suggesting popular support for his position.

However, Allatios' discussion of the *gello* also draws in another point of variance. To a Catholic it was imperative that a child be baptised as soon as possible. Following the interpretation of Augustine, the western church believed that the human race inherited the original sin of Adam which was passed on through human birth. Although the new-born child had committed no sin, it was tainted by original sin. If it died before baptism it would be sent to limbo because of its sinful state.³⁰ In the seventeenth-century West there was an emphasis on the duty of parents to baptise their children as soon as possible. In some areas synodal statutes were laid down to the effect that parents who failed to have their children baptised within a few days of birth could be denied entry to the church.³¹ In this context any delay in baptism was shocking to a Catholic and had dire consequences.

Baptism was not so urgent in the Orthodox church because of the Orthodox view of original sin. For the Orthodox, inherited sin was impossible: the sin of the individual

²⁹ Allatios, *De consens.*, col. 1100 ff.

³⁰ Baun, 'Babies', p. 116.

³¹ Delumeau, *Catholicism*, p. 194.

was the result of the exercise of his/her free will against the order laid down by God. Thus the sin of Adam could not be passed down to his descendants. Nevertheless, it remained important for explaining the present fallen state of mankind. The first sin had brought the curse of mortality and mortality brought with it the demands of the body which led individuals to sin. Although mankind did not inherit sin from Adam, the consequences of his action meant that it was impossible to avoid sin but in Orthodox theology a new-born child has not yet experienced this and is therefore without sin.³²

The Orthodox position on child baptism is explained by the fifth century bishop Theodoret of Cyrus:

*'If the only meaning of baptism were remission of sins, why would we baptise new-born children who have not yet tasted of sin? But the mystery of baptism is not limited to this; it is a promise of greater and more perfect resurrection, a communion with the master's Passion, a participation in His Resurrection, a mantle of salvation, a tunic of gladness, a garment of light, or rather it is light itself.'*³³

The Catholic rationale for child baptism, that baptism is necessary to wash away the inherited original sin, which would hinder it from receiving eternal life, does not apply. For the Orthodox, baptism brings the child into a relationship with Christ extending to him the promise of eternal life.

By the seventeenth century the position on original sin showed signs of the strong influence from the Catholic missionaries and from the Greek alumni of western universities. At the Synod of Jerusalem in 1672, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Dositheos, stressed the necessity of baptism for the eternal life of the new-born child.

'As the Lord saith 'Whosoever is not born of water and of the Spirit, shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.' And therefore, it is necessary even for infants, since they also are subject to original sin, and without Baptism are not able to obtain its remission. ...And for as much as infants are men, and as such need salvation needing salvation, they need also Baptism, and those that are not regenerated, since they have

³² John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes*, New York: Fordham University Press, 1979, pp. 143-149.

³³ Theodoret of Cyrus, *Haereticarum Fabularum Compendium* in J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, Paris: Petit-Montrouge, vol. 83, 1864, col. 512. Translation from Meyendorff, *Theology*, p. 194.

*not received the remission of hereditary sin, are, of necessity, subject to eternal punishment, and consequently cannot without Baptism be saved, so that even infants ought, of necessity, be baptised.*³⁴

Admittedly, the purpose of the Synod was to condemn the Calvinist position set out in the confession of faith of the earlier Patriarch, Kyril Lukaris; therefore the focus of this passage is on the necessity of child baptism, against the Protestant advocacy of delaying the rite until adulthood. Earlier treatises on the death of children, such as Gregory of Nyssa's *On Infants' Early Deaths*, avoid altogether the question of the fate of the unbaptised.³⁵ Nevertheless, unlike the earlier Byzantine statements on the fate of babies dying unbaptised, Dositheos is absolutely clear on this point. Those dying before baptism are '*subject to eternal punishment*'. Thus in the seventeenth century the Orthodox standpoint on original sin, and with it the understanding of baptism, moved towards the Catholic position. This meant that there was a growing tension in Orthodox belief between the older view of the consequences of Adam's fall and that influenced by Catholic theology. In this light, Allatios' comment on the need for an earlier date for baptism takes on new significance. It is not quite as divorced from Orthodox needs and practice as might first have seemed.

The ambiguous position of the new-born child

It is difficult to know whether this development affected the understanding of the *gello* during this period. However, there is evidence of an older conflict between the view expressed by Theodoret, that the new-born child was sinless, and one which held the non baptised to be polluted, sinful and closer to the devil than God, and so posits beliefs about the child which are closer to the Catholic position. The tension is manifest both in the baptismal rite and in popular beliefs surrounding the birth. During the baptismal process (by that I mean the process which starts on the day of birth and continues to the day of baptism) the child undergoes exorcism. This is carried out once before it enters the church for the first time and three times during the baptismal rite. These exorcisms and the baptismal rites as a whole focus on the separation of the baptismal candidate from his old, erroneous way of life, which was

³⁴ Dositheos, *Synod*, p. 139.

³⁵ Graham Gould, 'Childhood in Eastern Patristic Thought: Some Problems of Theology and Theological Anthropology', *Studies in Church History* 31 (1994), p. 51.

associated with the power of the devil. The first prayer asks '*Remove him far from his former delusion*' and that following the baptism reads '*receive this creature of yours into your heavenly kingdom, having redeemed him from the servitude of the enemy, open the eyes of his mind so that the light of the Gospel may shine in him.*'³⁶ These indicate an affiliation between the new-born child and the devil, and conflict with the Orthodox position on original sin.

The problem can be resolved partly by referring to the history of the rite which dates back to the early church when most of the converts would have been adults. The early converts were turning away from the gods and cult practices of the Roman Empire, which the church saw as demonic, to a new life in Christ. The retention of the rite for the child, however, reveals an ambiguity in its position with respect to the church. Although the child is born sinless, this rite suggests that while it is outwith the Christian community it is possessed by the devil. Kelly however states that even by the time of John Chrysostom, the individual catechumens were not truly believed to be possessed. The ceremony of exorcism instead dramatised the separation from their old life and had an apotropaic purpose.³⁷ Even in this interpretation though, the way in which the separation was dramatised suggests that the unbaptised at the very least had some affinity with the diabolic powers.

Moreover, although the high ecclesiastics may not have understood the ceremony literally, the concept of the diabolic nature of the unbaptised has a resonance in popular beliefs. The traveller Sonnini relates that the Greeks called the unbaptised child '*drako*'.³⁸ *Drakon* denotes a dragon, a serpent of huge size or a python. The serpent has long been reviled for its association with the devil, since its temptation of Eve led to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. It is also identified with the devil or evil spirits of the devil. More specifically, it is used in certain circumstances to signify the devil, vanquished by Christ, especially through

³⁶ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 275; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 271.

³⁷ Kelly, *Baptism*, p. 143.

³⁸ Sonnini, *Voyage*, p. 109; see also Stewart, *Demons*, p. 55.

Christ's baptism.³⁹ This meaning is particularly interesting, for the name *drako* is replaced at baptism with the Christian name. As baptism conquers the tyranny of the devil and death, so the name *drako* is washed away and the child is reborn with a Christian identity.

Before baptism the child is threatened by demons, not only because it lies outside the full protection of God that this rite brings, but because its affinity with the devil attracts demons. This relationship between children and the demonic is also suggested in some of the *gello* texts. In one of these the demoness is exorcised to the mountains to drink the blood of dragons (*drako*), the very name of the unbaptised child.⁴⁰ In another, the *gello* herself becomes a *drako* and attacks humans in this form.⁴¹ The *gello* is attracted to the new-born child because it is similar in nature to herself. Other similarities in names occur. In several texts the child is called *Abouzin*.⁴² This name is associated with the depths of the sea and primeval chaos, indicating the child's links to the world which lies outside the order of God's community.⁴³ It also ties the child closely to the *gello* because *Abouzin* is a name which is often used for the *gello* herself.⁴⁴

However, even within the popular tradition, the status of the child is ambiguous rather than wholly demonic. Although it has connections to the chthonic forces, it is also joined to the Christian community through its birth to Christian parents.⁴⁵ In the *gello* exorcism, God is asked to extend his protection to the children of Christians.

³⁹ Geoffrey William Hugo Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961, sv 'drakon'.

⁴⁰ Greenfield, 'Gylou', 117.

⁴¹ Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', p. 422. See the quotation in chapter 3, p. 111.

⁴² Greenfield, 'Gylou', 100; 107; 116; 126ff.

⁴³ Perdrizet, *Negotium perambulans in tenebris*, p. 23.

⁴⁴ Naming establishes a connection between the child and whoever it is named after, both in the earthly and heavenly spheres. Just as conferring the name of a saint on a child stresses the link between the two and marks the saint out as the special protector as the child, so too calling the child after the *gello* makes clear the connection between them. Naming can also infer the transfer of characteristics from one to another: a child called after her grandmother is said to be like her, even if there is no physical resemblance. See the discussion on naming in chapter 1, pp 166-171 above.

⁴⁵ Alexander Schmemmann, *Of Water and the Spirit: A Liturgical Study of Baptism*, London: SPCK, 1976, p. 144 where the author states that for modern times, only a child born into a Christian family can be churched. The children born of Christian parents have already begun the journey to becoming Christians themselves.

The protection is afforded to the child through the baptism of its parents. Through their faith it has already started along the road to Christianity, even before baptism.

This brings us back to Allatios' question: if baptism affords such protection from the creature, why is there no pressure to bring it forward? Even if the official church rejected the existence of the *gello*, some popular pressure to perform the rite earlier might be expected. In spite of his confusion between popular practices and those of the formal church, Allatios has identified a problem surrounding the *gello* and baptism. Admittedly Leo VI adopts into his legislation the provision that baptism should not take place until the eighth day, but urges people to wait until the fortieth day after birth, suggesting that many wanted an earlier baptism.⁴⁶ In the seventeenth century, however, there is evidence that some people delayed even longer than the prescribed period. Georgirenes, Bishop of Samos during this period, writes that many people wait a year or more before having their child baptised.⁴⁷ Thus, there was no rush to baptise. There is no conflict between the laity and the church on this issue; to the contrary, the church appears to urge earlier baptism on the population, rather than restraining them. This requires an investigation into alternative factors which act against moving baptism closer to the birth.

Birth and pollution

In addition to the concept of 'original sin' there are other factors which affect the cosmological status of the new-born child and work against, rather than urge, an early date for baptism. In both the popular and formal Orthodox tradition the mother was associated with pollution and therefore attractive to evil spirits in the period following the birth. A period of time had to pass before the mother was allowed to enter the church. Georgirenes, Bishop of Samos asserts '*a woman after Child-birth stirs not abroad, neither to Church nor to other houses, till forty days be expired.*'⁴⁸ Sometimes other members of the household could also be affected by the birth. On Samos, those present were not allowed to leave until the priest had performed sacred

⁴⁶ Dain, *Novelles*, novel XVII p. 68.

⁴⁷ Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 44.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

ceremonies.⁴⁹ Elsewhere the customs were less strict. Rather than being prevented from leaving the home, new mothers were only forbidden to enter the church.⁵⁰ In all cases, the interaction of the mother with the community of the faithful was restricted.

The pollution of the mother is indicated in prayers said on the day of the child's birth. The prayers intercede for the mother and ask that God '*purify her from bodily uncleanness, and from the divers inward troubles which assail her*'.⁵¹ The others in the house are also mentioned as the prayer asks, '*and pardon this thy servant N., and all the house wherein the child hath been born, and those who have touched her and all those that are here present*'.⁵² Birth therefore was deemed by the church to be an unclean process and all those touched by it acquired polluted status. For most, this period is brief and ends with the above prayers, which restore them to full union with the Christian community. In contrast, despite the prayers, the pollution of the mother is deemed to last for forty days. At the end of this period Georgirenes relates, '*...she is brought to the Church Door, where the Priest having said the Prayers appointed for that occasion, she is permitted to go to Church*'.⁵³ The instructions before the rite of churching the mother state that she must be '*already cleansed and washed*', that is, already cleansed physically and spiritually before she enters the church.⁵⁴

The same belief is present in the popular sphere. Here those present in the house at the time of birth '*are considered to have contracted a form of taint which deprives them of all communication with other people, until a priest who has been notified of this matter on this score, should come to bless them and relieve them of the impurity that they imagine they have contracted*'.⁵⁵ Again, this is because the mother was a source of pollution. In this example, the mother was not confined to the house, but even after this first blessing by the priest she had to be mindful in her dealings with

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 43-44.

⁵⁰ (Seigneur de) Villamont, *Les Voyages du Seigneur de Villamont, Chevalier de l'Ordre de Hierusalem*, a Paris, par Claude de Montr'oeil and Iean Richer, 1600, p. 178.

⁵¹ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; translation Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 266.

⁵² Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 262; translation Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 267.

⁵³ Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 44.

⁵⁴ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 267; translation Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 268.

⁵⁵ Sonnini, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 82.

others: ‘...she may enter no house without throwing on the threshold a key or some other pieces of iron, on which she must tread, if she wishes to avoid introducing the baleful influence by which she is believed to be surrounded.’⁵⁶ She had to be careful not to spread the contagion, a concern also reflected in the formal ceremonies which pardon those who have come into contact with her and have therefore become polluted.

The mother’s polluted state explains why she was not allowed to receive communion during this period.⁵⁷ Prayers ask that God ‘purify her, therefore, from all sin and from every uncleanness, as she now draweth near unto thy holy Church; and make her worthy to partake uncondemned, of thy holy mysteries.’ Later on they intercede ‘wash away her bodily uncleanness, and the stains of her soul in the fulfilling of the forty days. Make her worthy of the communion of thy holy Body and of thy Blood.’⁵⁸ The forty day period is here associated explicitly with purification of the mother and her impurity is related to the stains of both her soul and her body. In Orthodoxy a reciprocal relationship exists between soul and body: the state of the body has implications for the state of the soul, and all the faithful have a responsibility to cleanse their souls of sin through confession and penitence. The worst sin of all, the church deemed, was to take confession unworthily.⁵⁹ Similarly, should the mother take communion in an unready state it was deemed a sin. Despite this, as with baptism this stricture was relaxed in cases of illness. If the mother was thought to be in extremity, she was allowed to communicate, this having the property not only of healing her soul in preparation for death, but also correspondingly healing her body. If, however, she recovered, she still had to do penance for this.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp. 99-100.

⁵⁷ Darrouzès, ‘Réponses’, p. 341.

⁵⁸ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 267; translation Hapgood, *Service Book*, pp. 268-9.

⁵⁹ Pseudo John the Faster, ‘Ἀκολουθία’, 1905, .

⁶⁰ Dain, *Novelles*, novel XVII, p. 64-5; Cotelierius, *Νομοκάνων*, canon cccxxviii, p. 131; canon cccxxix p. 131 suggests that purification must still occur even if the woman dies. It relates that if a woman who has not served her forty days after birth is dying and communicates, twenty four liturgies must be said at her tomb and forty litres of water poured over it.

Although issues of pollution are often associated with sex, in this case the pollution of the body does not relate primarily to the impurity of the sexual act. Indeed the prayer makes reference to the fulfilment of God's injunction to go forth and multiply.⁶¹ In spite of this, it also states '*in sin we are conceived*'.⁶² In Orthodox theology, however, this refers to the general sinful condition of mankind rather than the sinful nature of the conception.⁶³ The mother's pollution occurred as a result of her bodily uncleanness and is closely related to the proscriptions dealing with menstruation which forbid menstruating women from communicating.⁶⁴ After birth women bleed for a duration of approximately six weeks and the end of this time corresponds more or less with the forty day period laid down by the church. It is the presence of blood which makes the women unclean and unworthy of receiving the sacrament: '*It is dangerous and precarious for one that is not entirely pure to approach the Holy of Holies*'.⁶⁵

Just as the mother does not rejoin the community of the faithful for a period of eight or forty days, so the child remains an outsider until its baptism on the eighth or fortieth day. The impurity of the child is not spoken of in the same way as the mother. There are no prayers to cleanse any bodily uncleanness of the child. However, as we have seen, it does stand in an ambiguous position with respect to the church, and prayers are said to exorcise it, or cleanse it from the taint of demonic spirits. Moreover, the tie between the child and mother is recognised by the church in both the first day and the fortieth day rites. In the former, prayers for the mother and child are interleaved: '*Show mercy upon this thy servant who today hath borne*

⁶¹ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 262; translation Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 267.

⁶² Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; translation Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 266. This refers to Psalm 51.7.

⁶³ Meyendorff, *Theology*, p. 145.

⁶⁴ Cotelerius, *Νομοκάνων*, canon cccxxvii, p. 130. Patrick Demetrios Viscuso, *A Byzantine Theology of Marriage: The 'Syntagma Kata Stoicheion' of Matthew Blastares*, Ph.D. Thesis, Catholic University of America, Washington D.C., 1989, p. 183 comments on the *Syntagma*. Impurity is linked to the concept of blood and human birth. Man provides the seed and woman the blood which is next made into formless flesh and then is fully shaped and formed. When the seed is not provided the blood in the womb becomes superfluous and corrupt. The monthly flow is a means by which women 'purify themselves'. The same time of purification is said to occur in the discharge of blood after birth. See Blastares, *Σύνταγμα κατὰ στοιχείον*, in Rhalles, G. A. & M. Potles (eds.), *Σύνταγμα τῶν θείων καὶ ἐκρῶν κανόνων*, Athens: 1852-1859, vol. 6., G 28 Basileios 2; G. 28 Laws.

⁶⁵ Ibid, A 16 Dionysios 2. Translation from Viscuso, *Marriage*, p. 183.

this child...and preserve the child which hath been born of her'.⁶⁶ Theirs is an unbreakable reciprocal relationship. On the fortieth day the instructions preceding the rite state '*on the fortieth day the Infant is brought in the temple to be churched; that is, to make a beginning of being taken into the church. And it is brought by the mother*'.⁶⁷ The mother herself of course is also being churched. Given this close relationship, which was recognised by the church, and the contagious nature of the mother's pollution, the child too is considered polluted.⁶⁸ Thus, there is no pressure to bring baptism forward because for both laity and clergy the period after birth is a time of pollution and therefore not appropriate for holy activities such as baptism. The pollution which attracts the *gello* also precludes the performance of baptism.

In spite of the issues of pollution, and Allatios' scathing comments about the immovable nature of Greek traditions, the ceremony could be moved forward if a child became ill. Georgirenes reports, '*upon the least suspicion of the Childs (sic) being weak, or likely to die, the Priest is sent for by the Parents, and without any further Ceremony, the Child is Baptized in this manner. N.N. The servant of God doth Baptize thee, in the Name of the father, Amen. Of the Son. Amen. And of the Holy Ghost, from henceforth and for evermore, Amen*'.⁶⁹ Although, as Moghila, Metropolitan of Kiev, writes '*lawful baptism must necessarily be administered by a minister of the Words*', an exception is made '*in Case of urgent Necessity, when any other Person, whether Man or Woman may administer the sacrament*'.⁷⁰ In this case the long rite preceding baptism is omitted and only the essentials remain: '*In private baptism they use only water, oyl and a Lamp burning before the picture of the Virgin Mary*'.⁷¹ Baptism could be used as a cure for the *gello*'s depredations, rather than as a talisman to ward her off.

⁶⁶ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 266.

⁶⁷ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 267; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 268.

⁶⁸ Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, translated by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee, with an introduction by Solon T. Kimball, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960, p. 50.

⁶⁹ Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 45.

⁷⁰ Peter Moghila, *The Orthodox Confession of the Catholic and Apostolic Eastern Church, from the Version of Peter Moghila*, edited and translated by J.J. Overbeck, London: Thomas Baker, 1898, p. 76.

⁷¹ Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 44.

Birth, baptism and the transitional period

In anthropological terms, pregnancy and the forty day period immediately following birth are characterised as a transitional period: a period of time when an individual is undergoing a transformation from 'one defined position to another which is equally well defined'.⁷² The child is developing from its constituent parts, the sperm of the father and, in Greek medical texts, the blood of the mother, into a distinct individual, at the same time as the woman is undergoing the transformation to motherhood.⁷³ This transformation does not happen instantly, the moment the child is born, but takes place slowly during the days or weeks following the birth, the first, ninth and fortieth days being particularly important. Transitional or liminal states are often accompanied by issues of pollution. This is derived from various factors such as the attitudes towards sex and the presence of blood, and also the perception of the anomalous identity itself. The period of pregnancy is a period of transformation, during which the identity of the mother is confused with that of the child.⁷⁴ This confusion is gradually resolved during the liminal period, which is also a period of separation from the old identities and growing into the new. This process of development and individualisation in physical and spiritual terms is apparent in both medical and ecclesiastical texts.

Texts concerning child development consider the spiritual as well as the physical growth of the child. They do not stop at birth, but trace the continuing development of the child until baptism:

'Concerning the conception of man and of the construction and engendering of him. Further, also concerning his death and worship at the throne of God. When the man and the woman are together, and the woman with the man, the womb of the woman being opened up, it receives the seed about to be poured from the man. When the man's seed comes down and enters the womb, the womb keeps it safe and guards it in isolation until the third day. During the third day blood also pours out from the woman and is mixed with the male seed and becomes like a

⁷² van Gennep, *Rites*, p. 3.

⁷³ Gilbert Dagron, 'Troisième, neuvième et quarantième jours dans la tradition byzantine: temps chrétien et anthropologie', in *Le Temps Chrétien de la fin de l'antiquité au Moyen Âge IIIe-XIIIe siècles*, Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris, 9-12 March 1981, Paris, 1984, p. 424.

⁷⁴ van Gennep, *Rites*, p. 43ff.

piece of meat and remains there until the ninth day.⁷⁵ During the ninth day it receives a form and remains in this way until the fortieth day so as to be formed with the shape of a child and receive a soul. And again in the third month it becomes like a child in the stomach of the woman. And on the ninth month the child is born. And on the fortieth day after its birth it is carried into the church and consecrated.⁷⁶

The text describes the gradual physical development of the child inside the womb, appearing as a separate entity out of its constituent elements. The shape of the child slowly forms out of the seed and blood of the parents and the development is described in stages. Particular attention is paid to the third, ninth and fortieth day and the third and ninth month. Various symmetrical correspondences are visible within this text.⁷⁷ On the third day, the mixture ‘*becomes like a piece of meat*’ and in the third month ‘*it becomes like a child*’. On the ninth day it receives its ‘*form*’ and in the ninth month it is born. The scheme includes the spiritual development as well as the physical, but the reception of the soul is not coeval with the reception of the body. The spiritual conception of the child, the arrival of the soul, takes place forty days after the physical conception and baptism, the second birth, takes place forty days after parturition.

The symmetrical correspondences of the text indicate that baptism is the ‘spiritual birth’ and this is supported by theological works. Nicolas Cabasilas, a fourteenth-century theologian, who states that baptism is the beginning of existence for the Christian soul, writes that while the child receives its characteristic physical shape on the fortieth day following conception, it receives its spiritual form forty days after birth. He writes that on the day of baptism, ‘*we are modelled and configured, our*

⁷⁵ Blastares, ‘Σύνταγμα’, G 28. See also the discussion in Viscuso, *Marriage*, p. 183.

⁷⁶ Karl Krumbacher, *Studien zu den Legenden den heiligen Theodosios*, Munich: F. Straub, 1892, p. 348.

⁷⁷ There are many points of symmetry in this text. The spiritual development mirrors the physical development, although it follows forty days later, and the development after birth mirrors that after conception. There is a symmetry between the spiritual and physical development in the case of the foetus and the decay of the body and departure of the soul in the case of the deceased. See Krumbacher, *Studien*, p. 348 and the discussion in Dagron, ‘Troisième’, pp. 424-5. Sorlin, ‘Striges’, 432-434. For a comparative schema of the intervals of decay for deceased discussed with regard to the *vrikolakas* see chapter 5, p. 182 below.

unshapen and indefinite life receives a shape and a definition'.⁷⁸ Before this the soul is formless matter, such as the universe before creation, before it was shaped by the word of God.

However, the physical development of the foetus is also not judged complete at birth, but like the spiritual development continues for another forty days. Leo VI states that just as the child must be at his mother's breast for a full forty days after birth in order to acquire the fullness of the human form, so there must be an equal number of days before the infant should be introduced into the divine glory of the father.⁷⁹ The child does not attain the fullness of its bodily humanity at birth, but must wait forty days for its human form. In this understanding the child receives the acknowledgement of its physical humanity from the community at the same time as spiritual recognition through baptism. This is in agreement with implications of the name *drako* discussed above: the new-born child is not fully human.

A second text concerned with the growth of the child continues the analysis of its development until the fortieth day after birth.

*'...the child once born, on the third day the swaddling clothes are taken off. On the ninth day it is said that it becomes strong and to submit to being touched, and on the fortieth day it attains the ability to smile, and begins to recognise its mother.'*⁸⁰

A progressive integration into human society can be seen here. The removal of the swaddling on the third day opens the child to the world, and on the ninth it may be touched, an important action of inclusiveness.⁸¹ The significant characteristics of humanity which reveal the child's growth are the ability to smile and recognise its mother. This implies the ability to interact with the outside world, through facial expression, and respond to external stimuli. The humanity of the child depends on its ability to interact at some level with the surrounding community.

⁷⁸ Nicolas Cabasilas, *La vie en Christ*, critical text by Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, Paris, 1989-1990, ii.14, lines 1-5. Baun, 'Babies', 123.

⁷⁹ Dain, *Novelles*, novel XVII, p. 68.

⁸⁰ Krumbacher, p. 353.

⁸¹ cf. the way the laying on of hands is used in the baptismal rite.

Therefore at physical birth the child has received neither its full physical form nor its spiritual one. It does not become spiritually or physically human until forty days have passed, that is, it does not achieve an identity in its own right until baptism but instead is closely identified with its mother. The earlier rites concerning baptism on the first, eighth and fortieth days stress the connection between the child and mother. This is not the case with baptism. In fact, the rite of baptism minimises the role of the mother and breaks the close connection between the two, also ending the confusion of identity associated with pregnancy. It is the new birth that is important here; the birth through baptism into the body of the church. It is the baptismal sponsor who holds the child, and to whom the priest returns it after baptism.⁸² The baptismal rite states, '*and fill him with the power of thy Holy Spirit, in the unity of thy Christ: that he may be no more a child of the body, but a child of thy kingdom.*'⁸³ Thus on the fortieth day the connection between the mother and the child is broken.

After baptism the child is no longer the child of the mother but of the church. This, of course, does not seek to deny the mother's role in the natural birth, but rather diminishes the importance of the natural birth in comparison to the second birth, which confers eternal, rather than merely natural and mortal life.⁸⁴ At baptism, as well as receiving a spiritual rebirth, the child gains a new spiritual family through the appointment of god-parents. It is to these that the child is presented after it is baptised and thus there is a movement in the ritual from the natural birth mother, through rebirth, to the new spiritual parents. The new spiritual relationships mirror the natural ones and they are treated by the church along the same lines as biological relationships. The prohibitions with respect to marriage apply to spiritual relationships as to biological and affinal ones. The same prohibitions apply with respect to marriage between families related through spiritual ties. The penalties for transgression, however, were much more severe, in keeping with the greater

⁸² Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 268; translation Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 270.

⁸³ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 278; translation Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 275.

⁸⁴ Marc Bloch and S. Guggenheim, 'Compadrazgo, Baptism and the Symbolism of a Second Birth', *Man* 16 (1981), 379.

significance of spiritual relationships.⁸⁵ Both the spiritual and physical developments reveal the gradual growth of the identity of the child between the first and the fortieth day after birth. The child is slowly individualised and separated from its mother, joining the wider community, until it receives its full identity and social integration on the fortieth day at baptism.

Naming, another ritual associated with the baptismal process, helps to integrate and individuate the child.⁸⁶ A traveller of the time reports that the child is given a name at birth which refers to the time or place at which the birth occurred.⁸⁷ This is a general name and draws the child into an association with the natural world in which demons dwell.⁸⁸ At the naming ceremony, the child is introduced to God and the congregation of the faithful and receives its cultural-religious name. This separates the child out from the indiscriminate chthonic powers and is also a stage in recognising it as a distinct person, separate from the mother.

As well as individualising the child, the name ties it to the community of heaven and earth. This is well illustrated by a popular tale, excerpted by Allatios: an emperor calls his unborn daughter after the apostle Simon. The name was chosen through a procedure advised by '*a woman who had experience of these things*'. The emperor had asked her for advice because on three previous occasions his child had died. She advised him to light twelve candles, one for each of the twelve apostles and to name the child after the one which burned for the longest.⁸⁹ This indicated the connection between the child and saint, and awarded the saint responsibility for the child. This connection and the protection it brought would enable her to survive where her siblings had died. In this case the child was named before she left the womb, and the

⁸⁵ Pseudo John the Faster, 'Ἀκολουθία', col. 1904; Viscuso, *Marriage* p. 87 where he states that spiritual kinship is superior to that of the union of bodies.

⁸⁶ van Gennep, *Rites*, p. 62.

⁸⁷ Eugène Roger, *La Terre Sainte; ou description topographique très-particulière des saints lieux, et de la terre de promission*, Paris chez Antoine Bertier, 1664, p. 390.

⁸⁸ Stewart, *Demons*, p. 165; Charles Stewart, 'Nymphomania: Sexuality, Insanity and Problems in Folklore Analysis', in Margaret Alexiou and V. Lambropoulos (eds.), *The Text and its Margins: Post-Structural Approaches to Twentieth-Century Greek Literature*, New York: Pella, 1985, pp. 235-6.

⁸⁹ George Pachymeres, *De Michaelē et Andronico Paleologis*, 2 vols., *Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae*, (ed.) Immanuel Bekker, Bonn: E. Weber, 1835 vol. 2, 3:32, pp. 276-277. See Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXIII, pp. 169-170.

name was essential to her protection, both individuating her and bringing her into a sphere of heavenly and earthly interaction.

The practice of naming children after saints continues to the present day, establishing a connection between the child and saint, and appointing the saint with responsibility for the child.⁹⁰ Evidence from the notarial records on Naxos shows that naming had a tangible effect on human relationships too. The grandchild inherited some of the property that originally belonged to the grandparent after whom he/she was called.⁹¹ Naming established a special connection with practical consequences between the new-born and grandparent. In some cases, it also established more than just a practical relationship, facilitating the transferral of specific characteristics from one to the other, suggesting a metaphysical as well as socio-economic relationship.⁹² The naming of a child therefore placed it within a network of practical, metaphysical and supernatural relationships, designed both to protect it and aid its path through life, as well as integrating it into society. In this sense the naming of the child had a similar effect to that of baptism, which, as seen above, also integrated the child into society and placed heavenly protection at its aid.

At the end of the forty day period the danger from pollution has receded: the child is recognised as a person in its own right, separate from its mother, it has obtained the protection of God through baptism, and is tied to the heavenly and earthly community through its name; and the danger from the demons declines. The threat posed by the *gello* in particular is tied closely to these developments. She devours children, and is especially interested in the '*liquid burden*' they contain, that is, their blood. There is an association between birth and blood, for this is the reason for the impurity of the mother, which is then passed on to the child. The experience of the birth is not the only thing they share: according to the medical texts, the child is

⁹⁰ Roger, *Terre Sainte*, p. 390. For naming practices in modern day Greece see Michael Herzfeld, 'When Exceptions Define the Rules: Greek Baptismal Names and the Negotiation of Identity', *Journal of Anthropological Research* 38 (1982), 288-302; Charles Stewart, 'The Role of Personal Names on Naxos (Greece)', *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford* 19 (1988), 151-59.

⁹¹ Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 81.

⁹² For examples of this see Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 1, p. 177; for the theory and modern day incidences see Michael Herzfeld, 'Names', 288-302.

formed with the seed from the father and the blood from the mother. Until the child is fully separated this connection with the mother remains. It is this connection which attracts the *gello*. The *gello*, who 'loves children', wishes to consume the fertile blood contained within the child, the blood which has enabled the mother to conceive.⁹³ Once the child is fully individuated the threat fades away. Baptism protects against the *gello* not only because it draws the child under the protection of God, but because it separates the child from its mother or confirms its physical separation, making the child less attractive to the *gello*.

The discussion of the *gello* reveals the common concerns running through popular and formal Orthodox beliefs. Although the Orthodox church might reject the *gello*, there is a strong connection and interaction between popular and formal approaches to birth. They share concerns about pollution, threat from demons and the attainment of the identity of the child. Curiously, the actions of the *gello* mirror the rite of baptism with respect to concepts of separation and rebirth. Both the mother and Melitene, at least in most cases, are presented alone. No mention is made of any husband. Thus the role of the mother in the natural birth is stressed, and with it the exclusive relationship between the mother and child that exists immediately after birth. Baptism marks both the separation between the mother and the child, and the entrance of the infant into the Christian/cultural universe. In order to do this, baptism enacts a symbolic death after which the child is reborn and placed in the hands of its spiritual parents. In the exorcism rite the *gello* separates the child from the mother by force, stealing it and imbibing the blood, resulting in its death.⁹⁴ Then the demoness is pursued by Melitene's two brothers who force her to return the child. These two brothers are the representatives of God, doing battle with the natural and supernatural order to get the child back. The *gello* of course has swallowed the child and in order to rescue the infant the saints have to force the *gello* to regurgitate it. This she does, and the child is returned to the saints alive. Death by swallowing followed by regurgitation and new life is a common feature of initiation

⁹³ Sorlin, 'Striges', 435.

⁹⁴ The word used however, can also mean snatch or carry off.

ceremonies.⁹⁵ As in baptism, once reborn, the child is not returned in the first instance to the natural mother, but to the saints and representatives of the cultural world.

The *gello* and baptism are therefore connected in a number of ways. On the surface the connection lies in the apotropaic and exorcistic functions of baptism, which are generally applicable to all demonic spirits. At a deeper level, both depend on concepts of the development of the child and its growing distinctiveness, humanity, and separation from its mother, although in opposite ways. Finally, and peculiarly, the *gello* story itself exhibits structural similarities to the rite of baptism, in that it too can be seen in the form of an initiation rite.

It is these similarities which mean that there is no great pressure to bring baptism forward even though the ceremony affords protection against the *gello*. The *gello* and baptism fit into the same scheme of development and in one sense are mutually exclusive. The *gello* attacks during the time of transition when the identity of child and mother is not clear and she desires the blood of the mother. Baptism should not take place during the time of pollution, which results from the presence of blood, and acts to individuate the child and separate it from its mother.

It is this sharing of common concepts and expectations surrounding the popular and formal approach to birth that stands against Allatios' suggestion to move baptism. When he urges an earlier date for baptism, he does not appreciate the deep underlying connections between the formal Orthodox practice and the popular beliefs that surround it. Paradoxically, the problem with his comment lies in the fact that popular and official beliefs are both more separate and more closely connected than he realizes. Although the church denies the existence of the *gello* and is therefore unconcerned about moving the date of baptism to provide protection from her, at a deeper level the popular and formal concepts surrounding birth are in agreement.

⁹⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth: The Religious Meanings of Initiation in Human Culture*, translated from the French by Willard R. Trask, London: Harvill Press, 1958, p. 51.

Popular and formal Orthodoxy stand within the same understanding of the world. Allatios' Catholicism on the other hand is informed by different concepts, the overriding one being the need for the child to receive baptism as soon as possible. Catholic baptism could act against Orthodox popular beliefs in a way the Orthodox church does not, and cannot, because it observes the same processes as the popular beliefs.

The Gello and Marriage

Baptism, marriage and death are the three crisis points of human life and the three points around which popular beliefs are especially concentrated.¹ The density of beliefs and practices surrounding them marks out these three social transitions which involve a change in identity of an individual. Transitional periods are always surrounded by danger from both human and demonic agents whose attacks focus on the vulnerable period when the individual is between identities, neither one thing nor the other, and threaten the completeness of the transition. While Allatios spends much time discussing the dangerous period surrounding birth (chapters II-III, VII) and death (chapters XII-XVII) he fails to mention marriage in any context. Yet marriage was perhaps the most important and significant transition in the life of the laity. In fact, Stewart writes that in modern Greece, *'the transition from unmarried to married status is socially the most important rite of passage in Greek culture.'*² The importance of the event is marked out by the richness of the beliefs and practices which surround it. Therefore the complete absence of the subject in a text dealing with popular practice is surprising and cannot be left undiscussed. Why is there this striking omission? Does marriage hold this central place in seventeenth-century Greece? If so, why does Allatios ignore it, and what does the omission reveal about his selection of material and overall approach to popular beliefs?

Importance of marriage

Through the ceremony of marriage many transitions of social identity were effected. As with other transitions, marriage involves a change in the social identity of the individuals involved and enacts a process of separation from the old social patterns and an entry into the new. The greatest significance of marriage was for the couple themselves. Through it, as the marriage rite states, the couple was bound in an *'indissoluble bond'* and the husband and wife were united in *'peace and oneness of*

¹ Alexander P. Kazhdan, *People and Power in Byzantium: An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies*, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982, p. 63; Jolly, *Popular Religion*, p. 19.

² Stewart, *Demons*, p. 174.

mind', embarking on the next stage of their life as a new social unit.³ This development was marked and aided by social customs as well as by the religious rite. In particular, the wife's dowry often included a house for the couple, allowing them to set up their own household and, indeed, one of the main purposes of the dowry was to aid the creation of a new family and the production of children.⁴ In addition, the husband usually came into his patrimony at marriage, enabling him to become financially independent from his parents.⁵ The transition to adulthood also came with marriage.⁶ For a man, marriage formed part of the process of separation from his parents and a move towards the independence that adulthood demanded.⁷ This involved a distancing from the natal family unit, a process recognised in the marriage service: '*for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother.*'⁸ This separation, of course, was also emphasised with the formation of a separate household, and the independence achieved through the assumption of the patrimony on marriage.

For women, marriage was an even clearer indicator of the transition to adulthood. They assumed adulthood when they began conjugal relations and thus the social and biological statuses of women were closely bound together.⁹ The change in their sexual/biological status occurred at the same time as that in social status. This transformation of female sexuality was expressed during a popular ritual that followed the marriage ceremony in some areas. The bride was required to walk over a sieve placed in the doorway. If the sieve did not break, her virtue was deemed to have been sullied for the breaking of the sieve as she passed over the marital threshold symbolised her loss of virginity at marriage.¹⁰ The social and biological processes were so closely identified that if one did not occur with the other - and the

³ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 311; Trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 291-2.

⁴ Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 79: this purpose of the dowry was stipulated in the marriage contracts. See also p. 74 where Kasdagli states that in 90% of the cases she examined the first item that the bride was given in her dowry was a house, and in 62% of cases a bridegroom received a house to serve as a dwelling place as part of his patrimony.

⁵ Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 74.

⁶ Kazhdan, *Power*, p. 63. In Byzantium, it marked the end of youth.

⁷ Evelyn Patlagean, 'L'Entrée dans l'âge adulte à Byzance aux XIIIe-XIV siècles', *Historicité de l'enfance et de la jeunesse*, Athens, 1986, p. 268.

⁸ Goar, *Euchologion*, pp. 315-316. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 295.

⁹ Patlagean, 'l'âge adulte', 1986, p. 267.

¹⁰ Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 1, p. 196.

sieve did not break - the bride could be repudiated. In places this rite had its corollary in an ecclesiastical practice. The traveller Thevenot reports that on Rhodes at the end of the wedding ceremony the priest breaks the glass after drinking from it saying, '*so the bridegroom breaks the virginity of the bride.*'¹¹ The social and sexual transformation of women had to take place simultaneously.

Although marriage required separation from the natal family, it also involved the formation of new ties. Through marriage two families were brought together. Thus the importance of marriage extended beyond the two individuals immediately involved and the wider family also had a vested interest. Marriage was not a matter for individual choice, but of family alliance, for it was the continuation of the family that was at stake. The spouse was usually selected by the parents, despite any attachment their offspring might have to another party. A girl might fall in love with a young man from her village, but this did not prevent her parents marrying her to another, from the motive of profit.¹² In marrying their daughter or son parents were making an investment in the future of their family line. Rich families would choose the wealthiest or most able individual for their daughter. In Constantinople, the traveller Sandys records that the best sponge diver was chosen as a husband by the parents of the most beautiful and best dowered girl.¹³ Similarly on Nikaria it was impossible for the man to marry unless he was a good diver, for otherwise he would be unable to support his new family.¹⁴

These alliances were important precisely because of the new relationship marriage brought about between the two families involved. Although the married couple would form a separate family unit, at the same time the natal families of the couple had to expand to include new members; not just a new daughter- or son-in-law but

¹¹ Jean Thevenot, *The Travels of Monsieur de Thevenot into the Levant*, translated from the French by A. Lovell, London, by H. Clark for H. Faithorne, J. Adamson, C. Skegness, and T. Newborough, 1687, p. 83.

¹² Xavier Scrofani, *Voyage en Grèce de Xavier Scrofani, Sicilien, fait en 1794 et 1795*, translated from the Italian by J.F.C. Blanvillain, 3 vols., Paris, Paris chez Treuttel et Würz, 1801, vol. 1, p. 35.

¹³ George Sandys, *A Relation of a Journey Begun Anno Domini 1610: Foure Bookes. Containing a Description of the Turkish Empire, of Aegypt, of the Holy Land, of the Remote Parts of Italy, and Ilands Adioyning*, Amsterdam, 1973, pp. 17-18.

¹⁴ Thevenot, *Travels*, p. 111.

the rest of the affinal family as well. This new situation is reflected by the prohibitions on incest which also refer to relationships incurred through marriage: in-laws were included along with blood relatives within the prohibited degrees. In the penitential of John the Faster there are penances laid down for those who commit incest with the bride of a son, or the wife of a brother or mother-in-law or sister of a mother-in-law.¹⁵ The *nomokanon* of Cotelerius deals with the situation in more detail and provides penances for infringements of the prohibited degrees such as if two sisters marry one man (6 years) or if the father and son have relations with the same woman (8 years) or if the son in-law has relations with his mother in-law (9 years).¹⁶ Thus through the union of the married couple the two families were brought into a relationship with each other modelled on that of the original family unit.

The birth of children was also closely associated with marriage, and this event is anticipated in the Orthodox marriage service. One prayer asks God to make the couple '*glad with the sight of sons and daughters*'.¹⁷ Another refers to biblical accounts where couples had been miraculously blessed with children, reminding Christ that he blessed the institution of marriage at Cana so that he might '*make it manifest that there should be lawful marriage*' and following on from this '*the begetting of children*'.¹⁸ In fact for the church, procreation was often looked upon as the purpose of marriage: a monk from Mount Athos wrote in the seventeenth century that sex was a terrible crime when not for the purposes of procreation.¹⁹ Not all were so strict, but contraception was frowned upon and stigmatised by its close association with the use of magic substances such as the head of a frog or the fat of a lion.²⁰

There was also a social focus on the production of children. In fact, it was considered so important to the marriage that the transition from single to married and the union of the families involved was not deemed complete until the birth of the first

¹⁵ Pseudo John the Faster, 'Ἀκολουθία', col. 1893.

¹⁶ See Cotelerius, *Νομοκάνων*, canon cclxxiv, p. 98.

¹⁷ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 313; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 294.

¹⁸ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 316; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 295.

¹⁹ Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 66.

²⁰ Politis, 'κεφάλαιον', 386.

child. Kasdagli writes in her study of dowries in seventeenth-century Naxos that *'abundant evidence from the last thirty years of the seventeenth century shows that man and wife remained alien to the other's lineage throughout; the two united only in the new vertical line they themselves would create. If they produced no children, the property would be used by the collateral kin, perpetuating their separate vertical lines.'*²¹ The economic interests were not irrevocably joined until the first child was born. If the wife died childless, the dowry was returned to her own family.²² Thus the transition of marriage was only completed with the birth of the first child and so the transitional period of marriage must be extended to include the rites following birth.

Marriage and birth were necessary not only for the family but also for the whole community. Again, this is expressed in the betrothal service: God is asked *'that there be granted unto them children for the continuation of their race'*.²³ In 1701 the Patriarch Kallinikos II expressed his fear that excessive dowries for the first daughter would leave the parents in poverty and make it impossible for the younger siblings to marry, having a dire effect on the Orthodox community as a whole.²⁴ Without marriage, a new generation of Orthodox children would not be produced. Marriage and the production of children were vital to the continuation of Orthodoxy.

Popular customs surrounding marriage

Marriage was the centre of many transitions and the focus of much expectation, particularly for women. Consequently, it was accompanied by a wealth of popular customs such as the divining rituals girls carried out to discover their fate at marriage, rites to prevent curses at the wedding itself and customs and practices to ensure the happiness of the marriage and the health and wealth of the offspring. All over Greece girls tried to divine their fate at marriage. In the Morea girls who

²¹ Kasdagli, 'Gender', p.77.

²² N. M. Vaporis, 'Some Aspects of the Civil Jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Constantinople during the Ottoman Period', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 12: 2 (1966-1967), p. 77. See also Stewart, *Demons*, p. 174 and van Gennepe, *Rites*, p. 48 on this matter.

²³ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 310; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 291.

²⁴ Kallinikos II (1688 Mar - 1688 Nov); (1689 - 1693); (1694 - 1702). N. M. Vaporis, 'Civil Jurisdiction', 158-9.

wished to find out about their future husband had to eat a special pie and then place a red, white and yellow flower under their pillow. The next morning they pulled out one of the three. If they caught hold of the white one, it indicated they would marry a young man, the red, a man of middle age and the yellow, a widower. The fate of remaining unmarried was not considered.

However, like the period surrounding baptism, which marked the transition of the woman to motherhood and the child to a differentiated human individual, the period surrounding marriage was a dangerous one. The marriage itself was very public and care had to be taken to protect the couple from those who wished them evil. During the marriage service the couple was at danger from the curses of jealous suitors who aimed to prevent the consummation of the marriage or the birth of children. At the point in the marriage service when the husband said 'Yes', an enemy could make three knots in a cord pronouncing some words - another author suggests '*I tie N and N with the devil in the middle*'. These three knots should then be thrown into the sea or a fire to make the husband completely impotent. To cure this, a pistol which had been used for murder should be placed under the bed. This not only lifted the curse but also allowed consummation to take place immediately. This danger could also be prevented by pressing the foot of the wife at the moment at which the husband said 'Yes'.²⁵ Knives, particularly blackhandled ones, were often stuck in the door to prevent the curses taking effect.²⁶ By preventing consummation and childbirth, these curses acted to impede the full transition to adulthood of the married pair. Measures were taken not only to protect the couple from these attacks, but also to ensure their

²⁵ For variations of this curse see T. S. Hughes, *Travels in Greece and Albania*, 2 vols., London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1830, vol. 1, p. 184; John C. Broughton (Baron Hobhouse), *A Journey through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey, Europe and Asia to Constantinople during the Years 1809 and 1810*, 2 vols., London: J. Cawthorn, 1813, vol. 1, p. 528; André Grasset Saint-Saveur, *Voyage historique, littéraire et pittoresque dans les îles et possessions ci-devant Vénétiennes du Levant*, 3 vols., Paris, Paul Tavernier, [1799/1800], vol. 2, p. 47; Sonnini, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 139. A variation occurs in Rycout, *Churches*, p. 312 where the mother of the bride employs the curse to prevent the husband straying from the marriage bed.

²⁶ On this point and the power of the blackhandled knife of the sorcerer see Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 195; 255-6. For marriage customs involving knives see Tertius T. C. Kendrick, *The Ionian Islands: Manners and Customs; Sketches of Ancient History with Anecdotes of the Supernatural*, London: J. Haldane, 1822, p. 214.

good fortune. Cottonseed was scattered on the married couple to ensure their felicity.²⁷ There were many rituals to try to obtain the love of the husband or wife or to aid conception.²⁸ Both husbands and wives, who had taken partners who were not of their own choosing, were anxious to obtain the affections of their partner.

***Gello* and *nereides*: their relationships to marriage**

The number of these practices and the frequency with which travellers recorded them highlights their absence from Allatios' text. Anthropological studies of modern Greece have also reinforced the picture presented by the travellers and stressed that most demonic attacks occur during the period immediately prior to marriage.²⁹ In contrast to the above, in the *De opinionibus* there is no mention of any of the rites or practices surrounding marriage, nor of the period being particularly dangerous to the protagonists. It is peculiar that Allatios does not touch on the subject of marriage at all, given the richness of popular practice in this area and his remit to discuss the beliefs of the Greeks in his own time. The omission is even more significant when it is realised that several of his excerpts are intimately connected to ideas surrounding marriage.

Allatios discusses both the *gello* and the *nereides* - the beautiful nymphs known from ancient Greece. Although the *gello*'s attack is concentrated around the time of childbirth, the birth of the first child was an integral part of marriage. The attack focuses on the child, but the child and mother are closely connected. What the *gello* wants from the child is the fertile blood of the mother: by attacking the child she is trying to obtain the very substance which ability to bear children depends upon.³⁰ Moreover, as with the curses which bring about impotence or sterility, the *gello*'s actions impede the transition of the couple to adulthood and in particular the vital transition of the woman to motherhood.

²⁷ Sonnini, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 135.

²⁸ Grasset, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 48.

²⁹ Stewart, *Demons*, pp. 174-5.

³⁰ Sorlin, 'Striges', 435-6.

Allatios equally fails to connect the *nerēides* to marriage. In modern Greece, however, this is the high point of their activity.³¹ Unfortunately, there is little evidence on the *nerēides* from the Byzantine period but, as Greenfield points out, ‘it would seem reasonable to suggest that the literature here may not accurately reflect the state of popular belief.’³² Therefore before investigating the relationship of the *gello* and *nerēides* to marriage it is worth discussing Allatios’ account because it is a rare insight into popular perceptions of the *nerēides*.

The *nerēides* are beautiful women who live in the countryside. Allatios describes their predilection for wooded and watery places and notes that they can often be seen there dancing in shady glades, particularly at midday. Characteristic of *nerēides* is their lust for young men and their desire for children:

*‘They lust for the young men, but especially the most beautiful, and they rejoice in infants of both sexes. When they are able, they seize many of the more beautiful and give them back enriched with precious things but keep others with them and cherish them.’*³³

He adds to this general description a story from Chios, which concerns a child who has been abducted by the *nerēides*. A little girl became separated from her family group and went running to a well which was near by. She was lifted up by a certain force and found herself drawn down into the well where she was safely set down on the water. Her parents noticed that she was missing and went to rescue her. Her father too was transported into the well but managed to climb out with his daughter when a neighbour brought a ladder. The family understood the event in the following terms:

³¹ Stewart, *Demons*, p. 174.

³² Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 190. There is a fifteenth-century account of the *nerēides* by Joannes Magister Canabutius in manuscript form held in the Vienna Library: Περὶ Νυμφῶν, τίνες εἰσὶ, καὶ πόσα γένη τούτων εἰσὶ, καὶ ὅτι γένη δαιμόνων εἰσὶν, ἃ καλοῦσι βαρβαρίζοντες Νεραγίδας, quae vulgo vocantur Νεραῖδες. Cited in Daniel de Nessel, *Catalogus, sive Recensio specialis omnium codicum manuscriptorum graecorum, nec non linguarum orientalium, augustissimae Bibliothecae Caesariae Vindobonensis*, Vindobonae, typis L. Voigt & J. B. Endteri, 1690, pt. v, p. 168. I have been unable to see this work.

³³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XIX, p. 158.

*'They attributed the seizure of the girl and her father to the nereides, pretending they had their dwelling in that well. The girl herself also said that while she was standing by the well, she had seen women playing on the water with the greatest delight and when invited by them, she had thrown herself into the well voluntarily.'*³⁴

In this case both the child and her father were unharmed, but the *nereides* could be dangerous:

*Often also at midday, a handsome young man, or pretty little boy, deviates from the path for the sake of relaxation, while thinking about other things and immediately falls to the ground. He is [then] bent by a contraction of the nerves or his face is twisted, or one foot goes lame if not both, or he becomes like a hunchback, or is afflicted by another injury to the body.'*³⁵

Allatios' discussion therefore shows two sides to the *nereides*. On the one hand, they steal children but do not harm them, and also enrich their lovers. On the other hand, they can be extremely dangerous, attacking those who cross their path. This ambiguity is characteristic of popular beliefs, but Allatios concludes that they were almost always harmful except sometimes, when in love, they made their lovers extremely powerful and rich.³⁶ In following this line of argument Allatios tries to fit the *nereides* into the standard cosmology of the church associating the *exotika* with the devil.

The behaviour of the *nereides* and the *gello* obviously does not correspond to that expected from women in Greek society. In Allatios' accounts the characteristics of the *nereides* are stealing children and seducing young men. During the Tourkokratia women did not have the freedom to behave in this way. Indeed, in some areas it would have been difficult for girls to meet anyone outside their family. Travellers often remarked on the seclusion of Greek women, who were protected from such attachments. Belon, on his journey through Greece, records that women did not

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

leave the house except to wash or to pray for the dead at cemeteries.³⁷ Guilattier even writes that those in Athens who were rich had a private church so that wives and daughters were not seen in public except during great festivals.³⁸ Some were betrothed without being informed by their parents, and did not see their spouse to be until their wedding day.³⁹

One reason why women were closely guarded was an underlying conception concerning the female nature. Ingrained within Byzantine and post-Byzantine beliefs was a view that the nature of womankind was closely tied to that of Eve. In the garden of Eden it was Eve who took the apple from the snake. This was because her nature as a woman meant that she was gullible and weak willed. She was also a source of temptation, for she then persuaded Adam to take the apple too. Women retained this characteristic, and were believed to lead men astray, particularly in sexual matters. The woman herself, and the society which surrounded her, needed to be protected from the potential chaos her nature could cause. For this reason she was usually placed under the authority of a male family member who would restrain the wildness of her nature. Through marriage too a woman was restrained and protected by her husband. The subordination of the woman to the man was emphasised in the marriage service, where prayers asked God to ‘*grant that this handmaid may in all things be subjugated to her husband and they may live according to thy will*’,⁴⁰ and following Paul’s injunction instructed ‘*wives submit to your husbands*’.⁴¹ In this passage marriage was compared to the union of the head and the body. The man was perceived as the head, exercising his rationality over the passions associated with the carnal nature of the body.

³⁷ Pierre Belon, *Les Observations de plusieurs singularitez et choses memorables: trouvées en Grece, Asie, Iudée, Egypte, Arabie, & autres pays estranges, redigés en trois livres*, Paris, chez Hierosme de Marnef, & la veufue Guillaume Cauellat, 1588, p. 149.

³⁸ André Georges Guillet, *An Account of a Late Voyage to Athens*, London, printed by J.M. for H. Herringman, 1676, p. 65.

³⁹ Guillaume Joseph Grelot, *A Late Voyage to Constantinople; Containing an Exact Description of the Propontis and the Hellespont...as also of the City of Constantinople...Likewise an Account of the Ancient and the Present State of the Greek Church*, translated by J. Philips, London, printed by John Playford, 1683, pp. 164-165.

⁴⁰ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 316; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 296.

⁴¹ Ephesians 20-33. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 297. Goar, *Euchologion*, omits the readings which follow the crowning.

Nereides therefore represent the converse of women in society and reveal the consequences of unfettered female sexuality. Where young women were closely secluded, the *nereides* were free to seduce young men at will, steal other women's husbands and generally cause chaos in the social order.⁴² The *gello* shares many traits with the *nereides*. Like them, she appears outwith this familial framework and acts independently according to her own desires. In pictures her hair is shown as wild and unbound, indicating the unfettered nature of her sexuality, and her ability to cause chaos within society (see figs 2 and 3).⁴³ In the story which precedes the exorcism of the *gello*, her female nature is free to act, unrestricted by the benign influence of male authority, until her actions are curbed by the saintly brothers or in an alternative version, the Archangel Michael (fig. 3).⁴⁴

More than the *nereides*, the *gello* is clearly an evil, demonic figure. She attacks an innocent victim, Melitene, or in an alternative version of the exorcism text, even the Virgin Mary and Christ:

'As the archangel Michael came down from heaven the unclean gello met him and he said to her, "Where have you come from?" She said, "I go into the creatures of God, as a snake, as a dragon, as a four legged reptile, to strike against men and women to make their hearts ache, to crush their brains, to grind their teeth and to abduct their infants - my tenth name is pataxarea.⁴⁵ And when the Holy Maria gave birth to the word of truth, I turned aside, departing to deceive her." And she found herself deceived and, laying hold of her [the gello] by the right lock of hair of her head, [the archangel] tortured her. She said to the archangel, "Release me St Michael of God. Do not torture me and I will tell you my twelve names. Where they are proclaimed, there I will not ever enter."⁴⁶

She is presented as opposed to God himself and those who represent him; the bearers of 'the mysteries of God', the saints Sysinius and Synodorus, and the Archangel Michael.⁴⁷ The association between the *gello* and the devil is clear. She attacks the

⁴² Stewart, *Demons*, p. 175.

⁴³ Thomas Provatakis, 'Ο Διάβολος εἰς τὴν Βυζαντινὴν Τέχνην, Thessaloniki, 1980, p. 114ff, plate 110.

⁴⁴ For a full reference to the extant versions see Greenfield, 'Gylou', 103-121.

⁴⁵ 'she who strikes'.

⁴⁶ Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', p. 422.

⁴⁷ For the version of the tale featuring the saints Sysinius and Synodorus see chapter 1 above, p. 54f.



Figure 2. Saint Sisynius and the gello



Figure 3. St Michael and the *gello*

'creatures of God' in the guise of animals such as serpents, which had a close relationship with the devil. She is also described as a deceiver, an adjective often used in relation to the devil because of his role in tricking humans from the true worship of God, in the garden of Eden, and henceforth. Most important of all, she also moves to attack Mary and Christ himself and thus threatens the salvation of mankind, acting to maintain the division between God and humankind created by the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. The tale therefore partakes in the cosmic struggle between good and evil, God and the devil.

In contrast to the *gello*, Melitene is represented as a good woman, redeeming her female nature through childbirth. Like all good women, she is depicted within a family context.⁴⁸ It is true that in the two versions of the *gello* exorcism quoted by Allatios there is no mention of Melitene's husband but he does, however, appear in other versions.⁴⁹ However, even in these he plays no essential role in the proceedings and thus in the manner of oral literature and folk tales, can be omitted without damage being done to the essence of the tale: the stealing of the child and the eliciting of the names from the *gello*. The lack of role for him can be explained by the fact that the events surrounding the birth are marked off as the preserve of women alone.⁵⁰ Melitene still appears within a family unit, however, for it is her brothers, Sisinnios and Synodoros who pursue the *gello* and restore the child to her. She is characterised by her relationship with them and also crucially, as we shall discuss below, by her relationship with her child and the status of motherhood. Finally, the two variations of *gello* exorcism draw a parallel between the two mothers, Melitene and the Virgin Mary in their sufferings at the hands of the *gello*. Through marriage and childbirth women can imitate the ideal set by the Virgin Mary.

In spite of the dangers they pose, the *nereides* and the *gello* underline the focus on marriage and childbirth which was the goal of women in Greek society. Their actions are directed towards obtaining husbands and children. The *nereides* seduce

⁴⁸ Catia S. Galatariotou, 'Holy Women and Witches: Aspects of Byzantine Conceptions of Gender', *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 9 (1984), 78-79.

⁴⁹ Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', p. 422.

⁵⁰ Sonnini, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 91; Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 1, p. 282.

men and steal children whereas the *gello* acts to obtain the fertile blood which is necessary for childbirth. With these *exotika* which represent the converse of women in society the 'good' desire for children becomes socially destructive particularly in the case of the *gello* who terrorises families until she is 'bound' through the authority of the exorcism provided by the (male) saints.

The *gello* and the destructive force of envy

Allatios fails to see the connection between the *gello*, the *nereides* and a whole range of popular practices surrounding marriage and childbirth because he ignores the context in which the beliefs occur. Frustrated in their desire for marriage and childbirth, the *gello* and *nereides* act to prevent other women from achieving these goals. By seducing men, attacking women in childbirth and stealing children they act to impede the transition which marriage initiates. The *gello* in particular was associated with the destructive force of envy. This arises from the story of her origin: it was said that she was a young women who died before child birth, and 'loving children too much' haunts women and those dying young.⁵¹ She had failed to fulfil her role in life and continued to desire it even after death.

Her association with envy is also stressed through her relationship with the evil eye. This is suggested by amulets or seals from the early Byzantine period. A number of seals have been found, bearing references to both the evil eye and to the struggle against the demons and the *gello* in particular.⁵² On one side there is an eye, pierced by two spears and a triangular bladed knife, beneath which various animals are depicted. On the other side there is a picture of a horseman, spearing a female demon beneath his horse. (see fig. 4) The word '*φθόνος*' (*phthonos*) or envy appears above the eye. In many of the amulets the horseman is identified as the biblical king Solomon, reputed author of the great book of demonology '*The Testament of Solomon*', by the phrase '*Flee loathsome demoness. Solomon pursues thee*'.⁵³ On

⁵¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 116.

⁵² See Russell, 'Archaeological Context' pp. 39-42; Paul Perdrizet, 'Σφράγις Σολομῶνος', *Revue des Études Grecques* 16 (1903), 42-61; Gustave Schlumberger, 'Amulettes byzantins anciens destinés à combattre les maléfices et maladies', *Revue des Études Grecques* 5 (1892), 74-5.

⁵³ Russell, 'Archaeological Context', p. 39.



Figure 4. Amulet against the gello

other amulets this figure is identified with Sisinnios and Synodoros, the saints who battled against the *gello*.⁵⁴ Moreover, in several of the exorcism texts the *gello* has the name *Baskania* which was also used to denote the evil eye.⁵⁵

Furthermore, there are similarities between the way the evil eye and the *gello* bring about the death of children. The power of the evil eye was extremely potent. There was no need for contact. Indeed, some women believed that looks alone could harm the infant and cause almost all the illnesses of young children.⁵⁶ These superstitions had deep roots in Byzantine society. In his attack on such 'superstitions' the fourth-century Patriarch John Chrysostom described how the evil eye killed the child: its power caused the victim to waste away.⁵⁷ The *gello* too, when she fails to abduct the child can also poison in this way. Allatios writes, '*although the child is not dead, he will later suffer harm from that contact [with the gello], since he will finally die, wailing and refusing food - never being quiet - because of a headache or some damage to the intestines.*'⁵⁸

Children were thought to be particularly threatened by the forces of envy. Fear of the damage that envy could do to the child, like fear of the *gello*, was particularly strong close to the birth. The danger posed by the evil eye was recognised both in ecclesiastical and popular rites: the prayer for the mother on the day of the child's birth asks the Lord to protect her '*from infirmity and weakness, from jealousy and envy, and from the evil eye*'.⁵⁹ Popular amulets, such as those Allatios describes as in use against the *gello* were also employed. All wore talismans and these were also hung round the necks of animals and placed in houses to protect them from harm.⁶⁰ It was especially important for children to wear the talismans because of their

⁵⁴ Perdrizet, 'Σφράγις Σολομώνος', 48.

⁵⁵ Greenfield, 'Gylou', 132.

⁵⁶ Grasset, *Voyage*, p. 48.

⁵⁷ John Chrysostom, 'In Epistolam ad Hebraeos: Homilia IV', *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, Paris: Petit-Montrouge, 62, 1862, cols 41-42; Dickie, 'Evil Eye', p. 33.

⁵⁸ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. II, p. 116.

⁵⁹ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 261; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 266.

⁶⁰ John Covel, *Extracts from the Diaries of John Covel, 1670-1679*, in James T. Bent (ed.), *Early Voyages and Travels in the Levant*, London: printed for the Hakluyt Society by Chas J. Clarke, 1893, p. 255; Sonnini, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 334.

vulnerability to the evil eye. Children were in great danger from indiscreet words and looks and of course the envy of those looking upon them. The threat could be warded off using garlic and salt and, once the child was old enough to move, cloves of garlic and stones with special powers were hung round its neck.⁶¹ Praise, as it incited envy, could also be dangerous to the child. A Catholic priest in Athens took a child from its mother and told her it was the prettiest child in town. Instead of being flattered, she spat in the infant's face, telling the priest that he had said enough to kill it.⁶² Praise intensified the envy directed towards the child, and so increased the peril it was in.

Unmarried women and the *gello*

It is particularly significant in this context that not only demons but also particular individuals in society were identified as *gelloudes*. The *gello* is characterised in two different ways by Allatios and his sources. He records that for his contemporaries in Greece the *gello* was an old crone, poor, disillusioned and miserable.⁶³ In Psellos' time too, it was to 'those tired by age', that the dreadful deeds of the *gello* were attributed.⁶⁴ This was also the case in the writings of John of Damascus⁶⁵ and Ignatios the Deacon.⁶⁶ However, some of these writers seem to be puzzled by a discrepancy in the tradition as other sources provide a different description of the perpetrator. For Sappho and *Suidas* the culprit had been the ghost of a young woman, who 'perished in an early death', and since she died young became a ghost, devouring children.⁶⁷ Ignatios tries to account for this by explaining how a tale has been projected on to certain members of society: those who have been deceived by

⁶¹ Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 1, p. 178; F. C. H. L. Pouqueville, *Travels in Greece and Turkey*, translated from the French, London: Henry Colburn and Co., 1820, p. 130; Edward Daniel Clarke, *Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa*, 6 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1810, vol. 2, p. 173, vol. 4, p. 170; Richard Chandler, *Travels in Asia Minor and Greece or an Account of a Trip made at the Expense of the Society of Dilettanti*, London printed for Joseph Booker and R. Priestley, 1817, p. 155.

⁶² John Galt, *Letters from the Levant: Containing Views of the State of Society of the Principal Islands of the Archipelago*, London: T. Caldell and W. Davies, 1813, p. 172.

⁶³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. II, p. 115.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, ch. III, p. 118.

⁶⁵ John of Damascus, 'Περὶ στριγγῶν', 94, cols 1604.

⁶⁶ Ignatios, *Tarasios*, p. ch. 5, 172. See also Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 117.

⁶⁷ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 117.

the devil into believing the ancient tale now accuse vulnerable members of society of killing children after having transformed themselves into spirits for this purpose.⁶⁸ This explanation is accepted by both Allatios and Psellos, but it fails to explain why this transference could take place. In the above cases the *gello* is depicted as a single woman: either a woman who had been married or one who was old and widowed. *Suidas* and Sappho relate explicitly that the *gello* is a young woman who died as a virgin. However, there is no explicit designation of the 'crones' as single. Nevertheless, they are described as old by Psellos, Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos, and Allatios and it is highly probable that these women were widows. Women were usually married to men significantly older than they were. This meant that by the time a woman reached old age her husband had predeceased her - often by very many years.

This identification of the *gello* with virgins and widows is closely linked to the ideal of marriage and the affect it had on women's lives. Although marriage was recognised as an important stage in life for both men and women, it was the woman's life and status that was more deeply affected by this change. Childbirth, and therefore marriage, had a fundamental effect on her status, and the change was viewed in a positive light. Married women were distinguished from unmarried girls and there were differences in their ability to act in the world. These, however, are difficult to discern clearly from the evidence available and the conditions under which women lived varied from place to place. It is likely that they had more freedom than when they were children. We are often told that before they were married women did not leave the house, except for weddings or funerals.⁶⁹ Even these occasions were dangerous because they presented an opportunity for the women to be seen in public. Often men first saw their wives on the day of the wedding. One report suggests that young unmarried girls were barred from the wedding celebrations.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ignatios, *Tarasios*, p. 172; Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 117.

⁶⁹ Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 2, p. 35.

⁷⁰ Thevenot, *Travels*, p. 82.

Through marriage a woman was marked out and identified with a different social group from before, a group which had particular duties and obligations in society. It is clear that this change was considered significant because of the demarcation of these groups by dress. Although there are variations in costume according to the historical period or area, the dress code also distinguished the social position of the woman; not merely her socio-economic class, but also her marital status. Unmarried women, brides, the newly married, older married women and widows were all recognisable through their dress.⁷¹ Once married, in many areas a woman was marked off from the unmarried by her dress, particularly her hairstyle or headgear. The traveller Nicolas de Nicolay illustrated his text with plates of the costumes of Greece (figs. 5 and 6). His illustrations of Chian costume demonstrate the above point. The dress of married women differs from the unmarried in style and colour. The married women of Nicolay's time wore a conical headdress, either white or coloured, which was bound to the head with strings and ribbons, tied at the back. A band of yellow gauze went round the forehead and was also tied at the back of the head. Unmarried women wore less elaborate headdresses decorated with flowers and allowed the ends of the forehead band to fall to the waist rather than tying it up. The dress of married women was also distinguished by the fine white shawl over their shoulders, the number of skirts they wore and the purse hanging from their waists. Both married and unmarried were distinguished from widows who wore black and covered their heads with a wide heavy veil.⁷²

Childbirth was the preserve of married women. Only they were allowed in the room while a woman was giving birth. Sonnini tells us that

'the first care of the midwife was to open the locks of the doors, of the chests, of the trunks, and of everything in the house that could be locked. This was a necessary precaution if one wanted the delivery to have no

⁷¹ Smithsonian Institute, *Greek Costumes and Embroideries from the Benaki Museum*, Athens, p. 7; See for example the costumes in, Angeliki Hatzimichali, *The Greek Folk Costume*, translated by Philip Ramp, Athens: Melissa, 1984, vol. I, pp. 26ff, vol 2. pp. 18-47.

⁷² Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 2, p. 91 notes that the veil distinguished the condition of the wearer. See also Jean Thevet, *Grand Insulaire*, vol. 2, fol. 166v., unpublished ms held in the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, Mss français no. 15433; quoted in Philip P. Argenti, *The Costumes of Chios: Their Development from the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century*, London, [1953], appendix B, no. 1, p. 259.

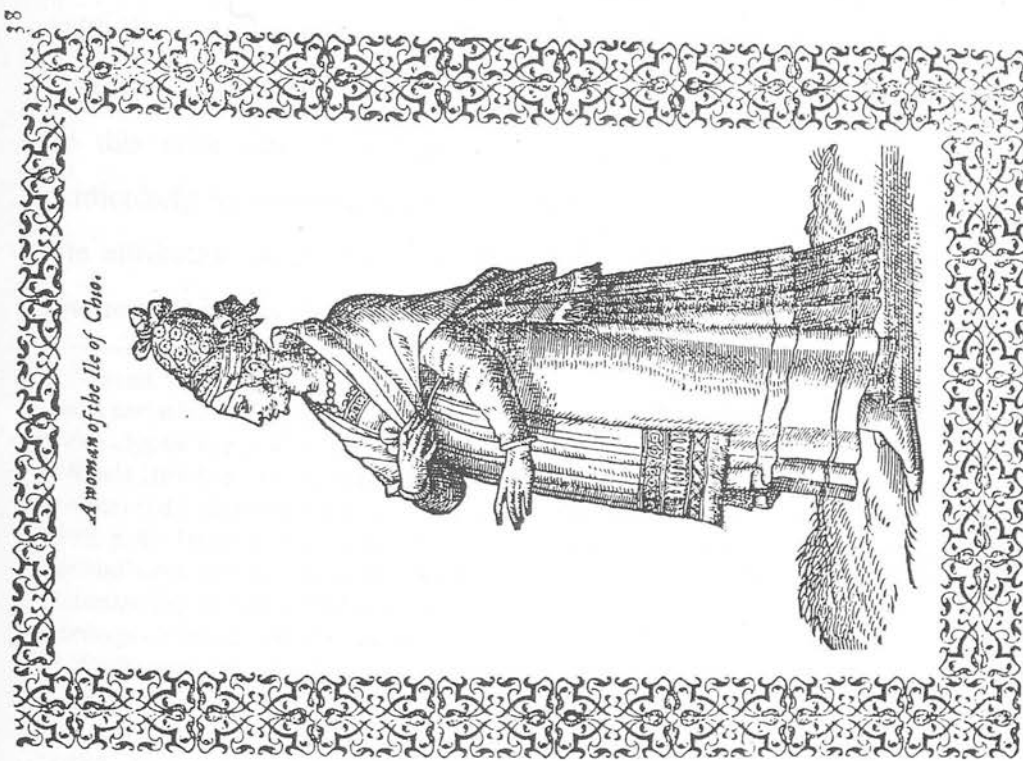


Figure 5. Costume of a married Chian woman

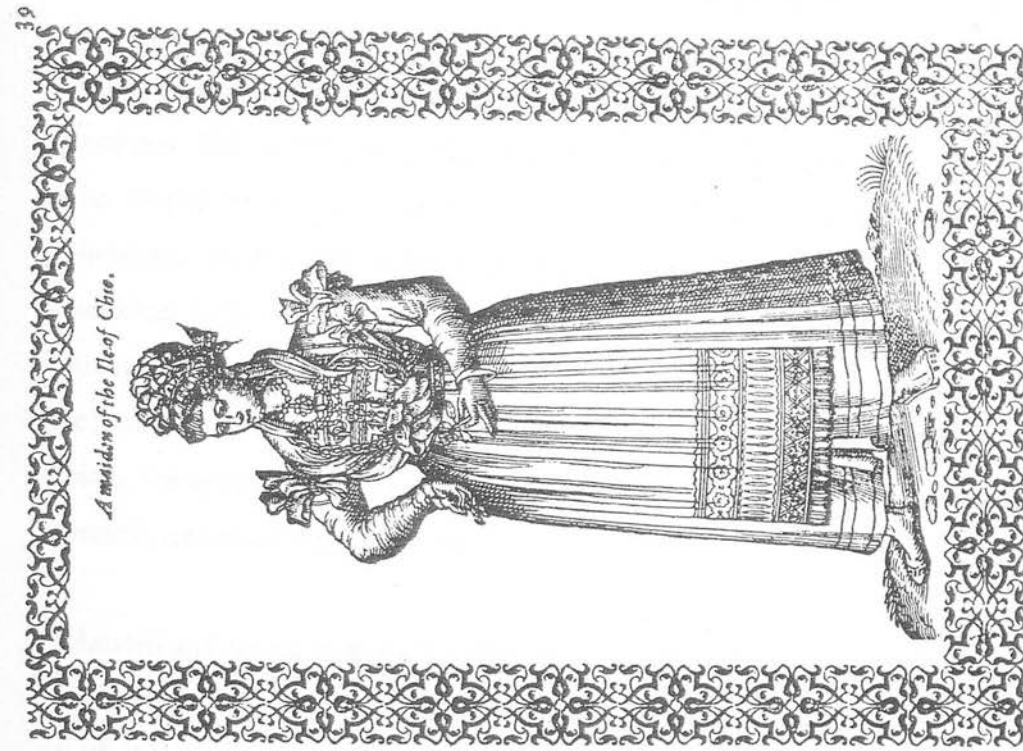


Figure 6. Costume of an unmarried Chian woman

*complications; and as a corollary of this absurd superstition only married women may be present, the unmarried being strictly excluded.*⁷³

This passage emphasises the need for openness during the parturition. It is important to understand the significance of the paired concepts open and closed, bound and loosed in Greek thought. These are not only symbolic concepts, but open/closed objects exert a sympathetic magic on human beings, preventing or facilitating a process. This is important when it comes to death. There must be no knots around the corpse or this binding can prevent the release of the soul from the body.⁷⁴ Similarly, with regard to sexuality, the cursing or binding of the bridegroom at the wedding ceremony which involved the tying of knots prevented him from fulfilling his duties on the wedding night. The curse must be loosed before his functions will return. In the case of a woman in childbirth, while closed objects could hinder the birth, the presence of the open objects in the room aided the 'opening' of the woman herself, necessary for childbirth.⁷⁵

Married and single women therefore were sharply distinguished by society. Married women were exclusively associated with the process of childbirth which brought with it honour and status. They were identified as good, productive, and associated with life and its continuation. The focus upon marriage and childbirth as the central and redeeming experience of a woman's life meant that all women not participating in this state were unfulfilled. Consequently, children were a focus of envy, particularly for women outwith of childbearing age. However, this does not explain the attribution of the deeds of the *gello* to only one of the groups of unmarried women. This was the problem which puzzled both Allatios and Nikephoros Kallistos

⁷³ Sonnini, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 81; Galt, *Letters*, p. 173 reports that for the Albanians similarly, all doors and windows must be opened and all those present must have keys, signifying their openness.

⁷⁴ See chapter 6, p. 191 below.

⁷⁵ Renée Hirschon, 'Open Body/Closed Space: The Transformation of Female Sexuality, in Shirley Ardener (ed.), *Defining Females: The Nature of Women in Society*, Oxford: Berg Publishers Ltd., 1993, p. 63. Hirschon's discussion of female sexuality is extremely useful for understanding Sonnini's comments. She argues that the categories 'open' and 'closed', are an important way of understanding female sexuality in modern Greece. 'A second aspect of the "open" state which marriage entails is that of sexual union and of childbearing.' She writes that 'in the specific context of childbearing the notion is appropriate, since it is the woman's body which opens to allow for growth and finally to bring forth the infant....Opening thus has a close association with creation and with new life, and it is significant that the word for the season of spring, the season of growth and resurgence, is *anoixis*. It seems clear therefore, that the idiom of "opening" is one which conveys both the idea of social existence, and the physical renewal of life itself.'

Xanthopoulos - the transference of the deed from the young girl to an old woman. Part of the reason may be found in the relationship of the two parties to their families. Widows often had to manage their own affairs,⁷⁶ and had fewer family ties to call on. The Ziskind manuscript, which records the decisions of the patriarchs of Constantinople during this period, like Kasdagli's work on Naxos, reveals that widows involved themselves in transactions to a much greater extent than their married counterparts. They frequently acted on matters arising out of their husband's estate - settling debts or acting in the interest of their children while they were minors. On occasions they also acted in their own interest, for example selling a house, or lending money.⁷⁷ Despite this greater freedom, or maybe because of it, people were highly suspicious of widows in society. In a culture which was suspicious of single women and acted to limit their power, they stood at a disadvantage.

The perception of the sexuality of widows also contributed to their depiction as demonic figures. The dangers posed by the weakness of the female nature were magnified in their case. Widows had experienced a man's bed and were more prone to passion than a virgin.⁷⁸ Their sexual desire, awakened by marriage and no longer fulfilled, or directed towards the production of children, was a source of gossip. Every time a widow left the house people would talk that she was eager to remarry, or pursuing a husband.⁷⁹ Moreover in some areas, as Sandys records, once women

⁷⁶ Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 78: '*Men with young unmarried children, however, frequently left their spouses responsible for the administration of their property and the apportionment to offspring.*'; p. 81 A woman was asked a question about whether she was willing to have her husband receive some money owed to her. She replies that her husband was her attorney, that she had made him master of her property, and that whatever he did with it was well done. Kasdagli comments that this probably reflects the actual experience of the majority of women.

⁷⁷ N. M. Vaporis, 'A Study of the Ziskind Ms: No 22 of the Yale University Library', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*, 14 (1969), Supplement, 90ff.

⁷⁸ Viscuso, *Marriage*, p. 117.

⁷⁹ Kasdagli, 'Gender', p. 71, Peter Edmund Laurent, *Recollections of a Classical Tour through Various Parts of Greece, Turkey, and Italy made in the Years 1818-1819*, 2 vols., London: G. & W. B. Whittaker, 1822, vol. 1, pp. 367-8.

grew old they faced general contempt of society.⁸⁰ Thus the widow lost not only her husband but also her social standing.⁸¹

In contrast, the young unmarried woman was situated within a close network of family ties, and usually closely chaperoned or secluded. She was thus less threatening, conforming to the pattern of a good woman. Her position also had the practical benefit that her relatives were anxious to protect her from slander as her reputation was important to them. Galatariotou has also investigated the way in which virgins in Byzantium are 'sexually unspecified'.⁸² They were not fully identified with the destructive female nature. Virginity too was regarded as the highest of Christian virtues; the virtue of saints fighting against the temptations of the flesh and ties to the world. This placed the virgin firmly within the Christian realm and made it more difficult to associate her with demons such as the *gello*. In addition she also had the potential of reaching the high status position of wife and mother. This too reduced her threat.

It cannot, however, be argued, as the testimonies from Allatios, Psellos and Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos imply, that in the Christian period young women were not visualised in this way. The depiction of young women as *gelloudes* does not altogether cease. The demonic figure is often shown as a young woman. In the seventeenth-century icon which shows the Archangel Michael vanquishing the *gello* she is depicted as a young woman with wild hair (fig 3). The activities of the *gello*, in some places were also attributed to other creatures, such as the *nereides*, usually described as young women, or brides. The *nereides* were known for their interest in children. Allatios describes how they seize young children, and give some back enriched with precious things, and keep others for themselves. In Zakynthos it was believed that they came during the night and sucked the blood of children, who

⁸⁰ Sandys, *Relation*, p. 80.

⁸¹ See Gail Holst-Warhaft, , *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature*, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 50-53 where the loss of position within society forms part of the widow's funeral lament in modern Greece.

⁸² Galatariotou, 'Holy Women and Witches', 83.

turned pale shrivelled and died.⁸³ Elsewhere this behaviour was attributed to ghosts, once again taking the form of young women.⁸⁴ These young women, however, were not human. They were either ghosts or *exotika*. Similarly, the *gello* of Sappho was the ghost of a young woman who had died young. It is only those young women who had not achieved their potential and had died before having children who became threatening. With this in mind, it would be interesting to investigate the burial of young women in their wedding dresses, described by many of the travellers, and also a subject of discussion of anthropologists, in terms of its symbolic fulfilment of marriage, and hence of its apotropaic qualities with respect to the *gello*.⁸⁵

Allatios' understanding of the *gello*: witchcraft

Allatios' lack of interest in marriage means that he fails to place the *neréides* and the *gello* in their proper context, and does not see any connection between them. His failure to recognise the underlying connection between the two arises partly from the fact that he sees each popular belief as separate and individually bounded and is not aware of their shifting nature and overlapping characteristics - nor the different names for the *exotika* which appear in different places. Thus he is scornful of writers who lump together *gello*, Lilith and other demonic creatures who shared some characteristics. Again, this view is revealed in his discussion of the nightmare or *ephialtes* where he notices that Psellos has a different description to that provided by the lexicon *Suidas*. He remarks, '*I do not doubt that Psellus has confused the names, which in that author is not surprising since he was always seeking abstruse matters and bringing new things to our attention. In these matters it is very easy for the memory to slip.*'⁸⁶ For Allatios the nature of the *exotika* are closely bound up with their names and each one can have only one name. He does not consider that variations occur in the use of names or that characteristics of demons can overlap.⁸⁷

⁸³ Oikonomides 'Η γελλῶ', 247.

⁸⁴ Dimitrios B. Oikonomides, 'Yello dans les traditions des peuples helléniques et roumains', *Λαογραφία* 22 (1965), 330;

⁸⁵ See Sonnini, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 146 for a description of the funeral of a virgin.

⁸⁶ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. X, p. 141.

⁸⁷ See Stewart, *Demons*, p. 162.

Secondly, he places the *nereides* and the *gello* in separate categories, understanding them as completely different kinds of popular belief. He compares the *gello* to western witchcraft and the *nereides* to spirits of place.⁸⁸ Thus the contexts in which he places these two *exotika* are western rather than eastern. He translates the eastern ideas into a western context to explain them to his audience. His designation of the *nereides* as spirits of place will not be discussed here but Allatios' association of the *gello* with western ideas of witchcraft draws in issues that are relevant to a discussion of the position of women in society. He states that people 'call a witch 'στρίγλα', 'strigla', the name having been readopted from the Latin and by the more abstruse name of Gelu, or Gello or Gillo.⁸⁹ The identity of the two is emphasised by the connection that Allatios sees between a name and the nature of a thing.⁹⁰ He then describes the Greek belief in terms familiar to western witchcraft: the people 'believe that certain old crones marked out by their poverty and misery, since they are unable to achieve anything of value for the human race, call up an evil spirit. After entering into a pact with the devil they contrive to the best of their ability those things which delight the devil himself'.⁹¹

This description does draw our attention to some similarities between the two figures. Although the witch was involved in a wide range of diabolic activities, the majority of complaints against her related to crimes against children. In particular, she was supposed to hunger after unbaptised babies, which were deemed as particularly suitable for sacrifice to the devil.⁹² This dreadful deed was also seen as the work of the same social group as that from which those accused of being *gelloudes* were drawn in the east. In both cases it was usually old women that were believed to perform such activities. The social group which was most likely to be

⁸⁸ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XIX-XX, pp. 162-163. On the *nereides* and Allatios' conception of spirits of place see ch. 7 p. 254-255 below.

⁸⁹ 'Γελού' or 'Γελλώ', or 'Γελλώ'. Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 116.

⁹⁰ Ibid, ch. XII, p. 142; ch. XXIX, p. 176.

⁹¹ Ibid, ch. II, p. 115.

⁹² Christopher Baxter, 'Jean Bodin's "De la démonomanie des sorciers": The Logic of Persecution', in Sydney Anglo (ed.), *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977, p. 79.

accused of witchcraft was the older, unattached woman over the age of fifty or sixty.⁹³

At a deeper level, Allatios' understanding of the *gello* in terms of witchcraft highlights similarities between the two cultures. Both East and West stress the link between the female nature and the diabolic. In the West, like the East, women were believed to be weak and easily tempted, and so it was thought that they were more likely to fall in with the devil and practice witchcraft.⁹⁴ Unmarried women were believed to be lustful and prone to the temptations of the devil. Widows, in particular could pose a danger to society. In 1540 Arnaldo Abertini, the bishop of Patti in Sicily, argued that witches were mostly old women who could not find lovers and who therefore became witches.⁹⁵ Again, older women were feared not just for their independence but for their passion, awakened through marriage, but unsatisfied in widowhood.

However, unlike witches, the *gello* was involved in a far narrower range of activity and directed her attacks only against women and children. She did not partake in the wider range of magical activities of the witch. On the other hand, it is likely that those accused of being *gelloudes* came from the same social group as those who administered medicine, and performed love magic and curses.⁹⁶ In the excerpt that Allatios takes from Pachymeres, the emperor, needing advice to secure the safe delivery of his daughter, visits a wise old woman. Again, minor magical activities were always characterised as being the preserve of old women.

Moreover, the development of western witchcraft is widely acknowledged to have been anomalous.⁹⁷ Although magical practices exist in most societies, the extent to

⁹³ Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, London: Longman, 1987, p. 139.

⁹⁴ Robert Muchembled, 'Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality' in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 151.

⁹⁵ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, p. 137.

⁹⁶ Sonnini, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 139.

⁹⁷ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, p. 9; Robert Rowland, "'Fantastical and Devilishe Persons': European Witch-Beliefs in Comparative Perspective', in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, p. 174.

which the church in the West systematised these practices and persecuted the protagonists has no parallel. The very involvement of the church altered the development of the idea of witchcraft, emphasizing the diabolic nature of the pact, which became a central factor of western witchcraft. While Allatios cites this as part of the activities of the *gello*, it never became a prominent part of witchcraft in the East.⁹⁸ By mapping the *gello* on to the western figure of the witch, Allatios attributes to her the factors characteristic of a western rather than eastern magical practitioner.

In associating the *gello* with witches, Allatios touches on an issue current in the seventeenth-century West, a period which has been hailed as the zenith of the witch trials. The late sixteenth through to the early seventeenth century was the most intense period, with the slaughter reaching a peak in the 1630's.⁹⁹ Geographically, the trials and burnings were not evenly spread: in contrast to eastern Europe, the number of those sentenced to the stake for witchcraft in Italy during this period was actually very low.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, it was a concept with which Allatios' addressee Zacchias was familiar: as a papal doctor, he was required to distinguish between sicknesses caused by witchcraft and those with natural causes.

In discussing witchcraft Allatios, the ecumenical scholar, is tracing similarities in the popular culture of East and West. However, it might seem surprising that he broaches this issue, and posits the existence of the diabolic pact in the East as well as the West given his underlying desire to present the Orthodox church in a positive light. However, he is being less provocative than it might first seem. In Italy doubts over the accuracy of the claims of the accused witches and their ability to carry out the acts described in their statements, led to a reluctance to investigate and prosecute claims of witchcraft. Increasingly, the diabolic element was played down by the

⁹⁸ In the west a diabolic pact was necessary to explain how the poor and uneducated could perform magic which was believed to require great learning. This they believed was only possible through diabolic means. In the east there are examples of the pact with the devil, but they are not widespread, and in general are associated with the educated rather than poverty-stricken old woman described by Allatios. Cf. Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 255 and Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 132.

⁹⁹ Levack, *Witch-Hunt*; Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969, p. 19.

Holy Office, who saw the individuals as deluded and foolish rather than involved in satanic pacts.¹⁰¹ Zacchias too was extremely sceptical of witchcraft, preferring to look for natural causes rather than take what he saw as the easy and lazy option of ascribing disease to witchcraft.

Problems surrounding marriage in seventeenth-century Greece

Allatios' discussion of the *gello* therefore takes place in terms of a phenomenon which his addressee and the West as a whole were clearly aware of. It is, however, a western rather than eastern debate and in placing the *gello* within an occidental framework Allatios misses the connection between the *gello* and a growing concern over the state of marriage in the East.

It is impossible, given the lack of information, to trace the effects of such social changes on popular belief, in any detailed way. It should be borne in mind, however, that central to the idea of the *gello* was the idea of malevolent and fatal jealousy of single women directed towards their married counterparts and their children. In the seventeenth century and even more so in the eighteenth there was increasing concern over practices relating to the dowry which had an adverse affect on the chances of Orthodox women, especially younger daughters, securing husbands and producing legitimate Orthodox children. Such a situation provided fertile ground for the *gello*.

As with most aspects of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Greece very little research has been carried out in this area. This is necessarily an impressionistic survey, based on accounts of travellers and patriarchal edicts. Although much useful information can be gleaned from marriage settlements in the different areas of Greece, detailed studies - excepting Kasdagli's for seventeenth-century Naxos - have

¹⁰⁰ William Monter, *Ritual, Myth and Magic in Early Modern Europe*, Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983, pp. 69-70; Levack, *Witch-Hunt*, p. 81.

¹⁰¹ Gentilcore, p. 12; 241. John Tedeschi, 'The Roman Inquisition and Witchcraft: An Early Seventeenth-Century "Instruction" on Correct Trial Procedure', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*, 200 (1983), p. 175-6; 'Inquisitorial Law and the Witch', in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds.) *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, p. 94.

yet to be carried out. There are indications, however, that the marriage market was biased against women during this period. Male occupations laid them more open to life-threatening dangers or capture by pirates. There are frequent reports of the activity of corsairs who seized men from their fishing vessels, or during raids on the land, and condemned them to the galleys, or sold them at slave markets.¹⁰² Emigration also removed young men from society. Sometimes married men would go abroad looking for opportunities and take their wife and family with them. Others would go abroad alone, hoping eventually to return with wealth to marry, or, alternatively, leave the wife to manage the family plot alone, without news of her husband for many years.¹⁰³ Single men too, would travel abroad, aiming for Smyrna or further afield to set up business.¹⁰⁴ Educational opportunities abroad could also withdraw young men from society. In the wealthier sectors of society families would send promising young men to study in the colleges of Italy, and some, like Allatios, would never return to live in their home country. Those attending the Greek College at Rome, however, were probably disqualified from marriage on other grounds too. They were to be trained as priests of the Uniate rite, and therefore would not marry. Back in Greece, although Orthodox priests could marry, monks remained celibate and monasticism during the Turkish period continued to attract converts. In contrast, Orthodox nunneries were extremely scarce because of fear over the safety of women inside the convent.¹⁰⁵

This imbalance in the sexes is also reflected in the dowry inflation which occurred during the period. There are many reports of concerns relating to the escalating size of the dowry and *trachoma*, that is the goods, or later the money, given by parents of the bride to the husband or his family. In 1701, reacting to the pleas of the

¹⁰² Kyriakos Simopoulos, *Ξένοι Ταξιδιώτες στην Ελλάδα 333μ.χ-1700*, vol. 1, Athens, 1994, p. 101 cites Guillet, *Late Voyage to Athens*.

¹⁰³ George Wheler, *Journey into Greece*, p. 63.

¹⁰⁴ The many divinatory practices reveal this concern. See Jacob Spon, *Voyage d'Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grèce et du Levant. Fait en 1675 et 1676 par Jacob Spon, docteur medecin de Lyon et George Wheler, gentilhomme Anglois*. 3 vols., a Lyon chez Antoine Cellier Cefils, 1678, vol. 1, p. 121; Wheler, *Journey into Greece*, p. 30; and also Allatios, *De opin.*, chs. XXII, XXIII, pp. 166-168.

¹⁰⁵ Aglaia E. Kasdagli, *The Island of Naxos in the Seventeenth Century: Some Aspects of the Economy and Society from the Notarial Sources*, Ph.D. Thesis, Birmingham University, 1991, p. 303

population of Ioannina, the Patriarch of Constantinople, Kallinikos II issued an edict on the subject, castigating

'[parents] who are about to marry their eldest daughter,[and] malevolently endow her with almost all their belongings and provide nothing at all for their remaining children, taking possession of their share as well, which belongs to them [the younger children] and which they should enjoy as participants in their ancestral property and inheritance'.¹⁰⁶

Although this problem came to a head in the eighteenth century - and there are fourteen prohibitions against it between 1700 and 1844¹⁰⁷ - its origins were firmly rooted at the end of the seventeenth. Kallinikos was reacting to a well-established practice. He writes that he wishes to limit *'this long and vile habit'*. It is likely that there had been discontent over this practice for some time before the community went to the effort and expense of complaining to the patriarch and the causes of the situation became sufficiently clear for him to act on them.

The report of Tournefort, the French botanist, travelling in Greece at the time of this edict, illustrates the issue to which the patriarch is referring. He is visiting the island of Mykonos, which existed under conditions very different to those in Ioannina, but the problem is the same: rather than dividing the wealth equally, the eldest daughter is awarded the majority of her parents' wealth.¹⁰⁸ In Naxos, the evidence from the marriage contracts indicates that there was a trend towards preferential treatment of the eldest daughter even in the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁹ This often meant that the

¹⁰⁶ Manouel Io Gedeon, *Κανονικαὶ Διατάξεις ἐπιστολαὶ λύσεις, θεσπισίσματα τῶν ἁγιώτατων Πατριαρχῶν Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, Leipzig: Zentralantiquariat, vol. 1, 1970, p. 70. N. J. Pantazopoulos, *Church and Law in the Balkan Peninsula during the Ottoman Rule*, Thessaloniki, 1967, p. 58-9.

¹⁰⁷ Pantazopoulos, *Law*, p. 57.

¹⁰⁸ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 97. Thevenot, *Travels*, pt 1 p. 55-57 and 64-65 pt 2.

¹⁰⁹ Kasdagli, *Naxos*, p. 360-361 for an example from Naxos. See also Demetrios S. Ginis, *Περίγραμμα Ιστορίας τοῦ Μεταβυζαντινοῦ δικαίου*, Athens: Γραφεῖον Δημοσιευμάτων τῆς Ακαδημίας Αθηνών, 1966, no 160 from 1667 limiting the pre-wedding gift to the bride. There is also evidence of growing concern over marriage with Turks in the late seventeenth century, for which a dowry was not required.

wealth of the family went to the eldest daughter leaving the younger siblings without a dowry and unable to contract a marriage.

The preferential endowment denied the right of the siblings to take a share of their parents' property. Pantazopoulos declares that Kallinikos is talking about the *trachoma* here.¹¹⁰ Unlike the dowry, which was inalienable and remained the property of the wife, the *trachoma* became the property of the husband and stayed with him even after death or divorce. It thus alienated property from the maternal family line, and the goods would not necessarily pass to the grandchildren produced from the union. In the excerpt above Kallinikos is discussing not the alienation of property from the family, but its grossly unequal distribution. The escalation of the dowry upset the traditional patterns of inheritance as much as the *trachoma*. In fact, perhaps both the *trachoma* and the dowry should be seen as part of the same trend, responding to both the vagaries of the marriage market and economic changes. The aim of both, after all, was to secure an advantageous marriage for the daughter and provide an economic basis for the production of descendants.

Problems surrounding the dowry were exacerbated by the economic situation which developed towards the end of the seventeenth century. Wealth began to flow into Aegean society, leading to an increase in the use of money. Although the extent to which this occurred in different communities varied and care must be taken not to overestimate the development that takes place, there is evidence that these changes affected the dowry. During the seventeenth century, money, rather than goods alone started to appear in settlements.¹¹¹ This practice was condemned by patriarchs in their dowry legislation, suggesting that this was viewed as one of the causes of dowry inflation.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Pantazopoulos, *Law*, p. 59.

¹¹¹ Kasdagli, *Naxos*, 1991, p. 287-288 for examples of the introduction of money into dowries in seventeenth-century Naxos.

¹¹² Gedeon, *Κανονικαὶ Διατάξεις*, vol. 1, 1970, vol 2, p. 444 ff, where Neophytus states that the dowry should be granted in goods not in money, suggesting the identification between the introduction of money gifts that had lead to the dowry inflation

The preferential treatment of the eldest child could leave the younger children without a dowry, making it extremely difficult for them to marry. On Naxos there is an example of four sisters, three of whom were still at home and unmarried fourteen years after their sisters' wedding because the eldest was given the entire dowry.¹¹³ The dowry was a vital part of the marriage contract drawn up between the families of the bride and groom before marriage. It formed a substantial part of the economic basis of the marriage and was an investment in the next generation. In the eyes of the laity this contract was so central to the union that the church canonists felt the need to emphasise that it alone could **not** make a marriage or even a betrothal. Marriage was a sacrament, and needed the prayer and blessing of a priest to transmit the grace.¹¹⁴ The canons, however, did not seek to abolish the tradition and upheld the parental right to make such contracts laying down fines and penances if one party subsequently broke their obligation.¹¹⁵

This fear that the undowered daughters would remain unmarried was explicitly expressed in a later edict on the same subject: *'The daughters that were provided with the most part of trachoma were married, whereas those who had nothing to offer, and were in want at the time of marriage, melted away together with their own fathers and mothers and remained unripe....'*¹¹⁶ The traditional solution to the problem of females who could not be married off was more difficult to apply during this period. There were far fewer nunneries, many of which had been disbanded after the Turkish conquest because of fear for the safety of communities of women. The alternatives to marriage in the seventeenth century were far less socially acceptable. The Patriarch Neophytos is concerned that the lack of opportunity to contract a Christian marriage would drive young women to *'the evils resultant from need. Because they either schemed to capture men in passion, or driven to despair, they were reduced to lawless nikah and to most disreputable downfalls.'*¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Kasdagli, *Naxos*, p. 362.

¹¹⁴ Viscuso, *Marriage*, p. 142; Kasdagli, *Naxos*, pp. 294-5.

¹¹⁵ Cotelerius, *Νομοκάνων*, canon cccxxx, p. 129.

¹¹⁶ Letter (1736) of the metropolitan of Athens to the Patriarch Neophytos VI, corresponding to the earlier one of Patriarch Neophytus IV (1686-1689), Pantazopoulos, *Law*, pp. 59-60.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

The *lawless nikah*, to which Neophytos refers, denotes a Turkish civil marriage. There were two types of this marriage which could be contracted between a Turkish man and a Christian woman. One, *nikah kenise* was a form of cohabitation with a Christian slave. *Nikah Munkuta*, called *kepinion* in Greek, was a temporary marriage which could take place between a Muslim man, and a woman of a 'religion of the book', either Christian or Jewish.¹¹⁸ Permanent Turkish marriages could only occur between Muslims.

Neophytos is probably referring to *kepinion* here. In this form of marriage, '*for the Wives of Kebin*,' as Thevenot refers to it,

'a Man goes to the Cady, tells him, that he takes such an one to Wife, to whom he promises to pay so much if he divorce her; all this the Cady writes down, and gives the writing to the Man, who (after that) may keep the Wife as long as he pleases, or send her going when he thinks fit, paying her what he promised, and maintaining the Children he hath had by her.'¹¹⁹

This indicates why the patriarch made a connection between lack of dowry and marriage by *kepinion*. In the *kepinion* it was the bridegroom rather than the family of the bride who provided the dowry. This seems to have been characteristic of Turkish marriages as a whole.¹²⁰ Without a dowry or *trachoma* the younger daughters were unable to contract lawful marriages. On the one hand, they might '*fade away*', with their parents failing to achieve immortality through their descendants. On the other hand, they might turn to alternative relationships or illicit liaisons either from need or from the passions of their nature. Outside the protection of marriage, their 'natural passions', or poverty would lead to their disgrace.

Despite the necessity of contracting these unions they were often seen as scandalous and harmful to the woman's reputation.¹²¹ Through it the women did not redeem their natures and achieve the high status that they got from marriage. These unions

¹¹⁸ Pantazopoulos, *Law*, pp. 93-94. See also Paul Rycout, *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, London, printed for John Starkey and Henry Brome, 1668, p. 154.

¹¹⁹ Thevenot, *Travels*, p. 55.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 55.

¹²¹ Kasdagli, *Naxos* p. 323 n. 94.

were seen as the result of passion, contracted through the impulse of the female nature, rather than restraining it. Nor did the production of children redeem them. The children from these unions did not have the same status as those born from a married couple. All the children born from *kepinion* came under the guardianship of the father, and if he was Muslim, also followed his faith and were lost to Orthodoxy.¹²² Even children of two Christians joined by *kepinion* were not accorded certain privileges: they could not continue the family and inherit property in the same way as legitimate children.¹²³ If the husband married another woman in the Orthodox ceremony subsequent to a relationship of *kepinion* the legitimate children would take preference over the others in the inheritance. Illegitimate children had no automatic right to their father's property, and inheritance as we have seen was an important way of ensuring continuity between generations.

The union of marriage, which was always in danger of threats and curses from rivals and the harmful results of jealousy became even more fraught in these circumstances. The social tensions were exacerbated by the display of wealth which was connected to the competition over marriage. This new wealth was often displayed in the adornment of womenfolk. Again, Patriarch Kallinikos and his successors were forced to take measures, this time to limit the jewellery that women could wear.¹²⁴ It is clear that this finery was understood as an indication of status and wealth. This explains why the two issues are frequently linked together in patriarchal edicts. They considered that the display of wealth fuelled the escalation of dowries. The more wealth that was displayed, the richer the family was presumed to be, and the higher the dowry was expected to be. By restricting the display, the patriarchs sought to stem the rise of marriage payments.¹²⁵

¹²² Scrofani, *Voyage en Grèce*, vol. 1, p. 105. See also Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 312, where the argument to ban Christian Turkish marriages depends on the point that children born from them were not fit to become Muslims.

¹²³ Kasdagli, *Naxos*, p. 325.

¹²⁴ Gedeon, *Κανονικαὶ Διατάξεις*, vol. 1, p. 68, 70ff.

¹²⁵ N. M. Vaporis, 'Civil Jurisdiction' p. 158.

Therefore in the seventeenth century it became increasingly difficult for women who anxiously peered into their future to discover their fate at marriage - and we should remember that the results of the divination never allowed the possibility of remaining unmarried - to achieve their aim. With the changing situation and greater competitiveness of the marriage market, it became more problematic to secure the marriage of the younger daughters. Society still had no respectable alternative to marriage for women, especially during a period when there were few convents. They had to fend the best they could, either remaining at home, or contracting less respectable liaisons. These relationships brought none of the social status linked to marriage and the production of children. The end of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth saw more women falling outside the ideal relationship of marriage, and more single women. Such a situation would have increased the tension between the eldest successfully married with children, and her spinster siblings at home. This provided a situation in which jealousy could flourish, providing the *gello* with fertile ground.

In conclusion, in seventeenth-century Greece marriage was an important social rite and as such was marked by a profusion of rituals and beliefs. In spite of this, Allatios' text, which takes as its subject matter the popular beliefs and practices of the people of Greece, does not include a discussion of marriage, even though some of the excerpts he uses are closely connected to it. Instead, he places these beliefs in a western context. In doing so he ignores the tensions within the marriage market at this time which are relevant to the understanding of the *gello* in seventeenth-century Greece.

Allatios' failure to consider marriage in any context should lead us to question his underlying concerns. Perhaps this omission occurs because he and his closest associates never married and so he had less experience, information or interest in it. Moreover, the question of marriage, unlike witchcraft, was not a current topic of concern in his circles; nor does it play a role in the ecumenical discussions as it is not a point of doctrine over which the two churches differ. However, it was a point

of great debate within the eastern church during this period. Allatios who often connects the popular beliefs to ecclesiastical debates fails to do so in this case. His neglect of marriage reveals his lack of knowledge of the interaction between popular Orthodoxy and the society in which it was situated. This arises partly from his view of history where customs ‘*always remain the same*’ and therefore are not affected by current debates.¹²⁶ This allows him to focus on texts rather than personal experience. Moreover, it reveals that his own interest in the ‘opinions of the Greeks today’ centres on issues which play a role in the discussion of the relationship between the two churches. Allatios does not treat the question of marriage because his interest in popular beliefs lies in those areas which concerned an ecumenicist.

¹²⁶ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 114.

The Revenant in Seventeenth-Century Greece

The chapters relating to the *vrikolakas* are probably the best known passages of *De quorundam graecorum opinionibus*. Summers, in his collection of vampire lore, quotes extensively from the chapters in question and notes Allatios' detailed attention to vampire lore.¹ Travellers too, notably Pashley in the nineteenth century, have made use of his text to shed light on their own experience, but it is not only nineteenth-century authors with their interest in folklore who have bowed to Allatios' authority on this matter; writers nearer his own time also acknowledged his expertise. As early as 1676 his chapters on the Greek revenant were quoted by G. Fehlau in his commentary on Christophorus Angelus' *De statu hodiernorum Graecorum* to elucidate the excommunication ritual of the Greeks.² The traveller and botanist Tournefort, who provides one of the most vivid accounts of the *vrikolakas*, has also clearly read Allatios.³ Standing on the boundary between Greek and Latin culture on this as in other matters, Allatios' account of the so-called Greek vampire was highly influential on western accounts of the phenomenon. Perhaps because of his ability to explain things for a western audience, Allatios' own interpretation has never been assessed. This section will present a discussion of the evidence provided by Allatios, placing the beliefs he considers in the context of Greek theology and society. Using the deeper understanding gained by this analysis the section will then move towards an evaluation of Allatios' own interpretation of the sources.

It may be misleading to use the term vampire in the context of the Greek revenant. The vampire with which we in the West are most familiar is the dracula of Bram Stoker and 'B' movie fame, with his long flowing cape, fangs, and blood drinking habit. Although both the Greek Vampire and this so-called Transylvanian cousin are both revenants, that is, resurrected dead bodies, they differ greatly in style and in their relationships with members of society. It is not helpful to call this creature a vampire as this word carries with it connotations alien to the phenomenon. What

¹M. Summers, *Europe*, p. 223.

²Christophorus Angelos, *De statu hodiernorum Graecorum*, with notes by Georgius Fehlavius, Lipsia, printed by Johannes Grossius, 1668, ch. 25, pp. 526-555.

³Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 103 margin notes.

should be used in its stead? A plethora of terms for the revenant exist in Greek, with each area having its own variation of the species. It is called variously, *vrikolakas*, *yourvoulakas*, *katachthonios*.⁴ *Vrikolakas*, however, is the most common Greek word for it and so seems to be the most suitable.

Although the *vrikolakas* exhibits none of the traditional behaviour of the 'Transylvanian' vampire, nonetheless it had the ability to cause great terror within a community. Tournefort described the behaviour of a village in Mykonos which has a *vrikolakas* in its midst:

*'Whole families quitted their Houses, and brought their Tent-Beds from the farthest parts of the Town into the publick Place, there to spend the night. They were every instant complaining of some new Insult; nothing was to be heard but Sighs and Groans at the approach of Night: the better sort of People retired into the Country.'*⁵

The creature was so terrifying that it could drive whole villages to decamp. For Allatios too it was the most terrifying of the '*exotika*' he discussed, for he writes that all the others were bearable except for the *vrikolakas*.⁶ This frightening creature can be recognised by its characteristic appearance. It was found in the tomb in a black and swollen state, with teeth, hair and nails intact and because it had not completely rotted away it was said to be '*alytos*', literally 'undissolved'. According to Allatios, a *vrikolakas* was made up from the body of an excommunicated man whose corpse had been entered by the Devil. This body then rampaged round the town causing havoc, and often death to those it met.⁷ This is a curious description as it does not fit exactly with any of the sources Allatios presents. In the first example he provides, excommunication has nothing whatsoever to do with the creation of the *vrikolakas*. Although the Devil does enter the dead body, the church has not previously designated which bodies are open to the Devil, nor is the individual to blame in any

⁴ A wide range of these terms can be found in, Stelios A. Mouzakis, *Οι βρικόλακες: Δοξασίες, προλήψεις και παραδόσεις σέ καταγραφές από τούς αρχαίους και μεταβυζαντινούς χρόνους*, Athens: Βιβλιοπολειότητων Βιβλιοφιλών, 1989, ch. 1.

⁵ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 105.

⁶ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XI, p. 142.

⁷ *Ibid*, ch. XII, pp. 142-3.

way for the possession. Instead, the source points out that the Devil is given the power to enter the body by the failure of the local community to follow the prescriptions of the church.⁸ The laity is deceived by the Devil into believing that the dead man has become a *vrikolakas* and rush to his tomb to destroy him. This lack of faith in the instructions of God laid down by the church gives the Devil the power to possess the body in actuality. The church then is brought in to perform the rite of exorcism, which casts out the demon and enables the body to dissolve.⁹

As Allatios says, '*in these words there are clearly many details worth considering*',¹⁰ and this passage will be discussed in more depth below. Here the main concern is the extent to which Allatios' sources present two different accounts of the revenant. The first source he presents is a canon from a *nomokanon* attributed to John the Faster, but probably from the sixteenth-century *nomokanon* of Malaxos which has absorbed the earlier works.¹¹ Here it is the action of the laity which causes the body to take shape. In Allatios' other sources, even those taken from the same *nomokanon*, it was the excommunication of the body which caused it to remain undissolved, and absolution which allowed it to disintegrate.¹² Once the body had been absolved, the effects of the excommunication also disappeared. In the excerpt attributed to Cassian, one dissenting bishop was excommunicated by the others at a church council and remained undissolved.¹³ One hundred years later another synod was held in the same place and this time the bishops absolved their long-dead colleague saying, '*A bishop struck by anathema sinned against the church and the church excommunicated him. We are also the church and we forgive him, since it is human to sin.*'¹⁴ In this example the creation and dissolution of the body are controlled exclusively by the church.

⁸ Ibid, ch. XII, p. 144.

⁹ Ibid, ch. XII, p. 143 ff.

¹⁰ Ibid, ch. XIII, XIII, p. 145.

¹¹ Ibid, ch. XII, p. 143.

¹² Ibid, chs. XIV-XVIII, pp. 149-158.

¹³ Although Allatios attributes this to Cassian, the excerpt is not contained in any of his extant works.

¹⁴ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XVI, p. 153; Angelos, *De statu*, p. 524

The two groups of sources are also at variance over the discovery of the body. In the former it was the laity who 'discovered' the undissolved corpse, in the latter, at least in all the examples presented by Allatios, it was the clergy.¹⁵ The laity had no difficulty at all in discovering the whereabouts of the corpse: the *vrikolakas* revealed itself to the people through dreams and appearances, which the church believed were deceptions of the Devil. Nevertheless, there was no question of having to search for the body - it appeared of its own volition and terrified the neighbourhood. In contrast, in one example from the second group of sources, the patriarch has to hold a conference with his clerics to try to remember where an excommunicated body had been buried.¹⁶ In comparison to the wild rampaging of the *vrikolakas* this creature seems curiously passive.

Not only do the revenants of these two sources exhibit different characteristics, they are also referred to by different names. While the creature in the first extract from the *nomokanon* is called a *vrikolakas*, in the other sources it is referred to as a *tympaniaios*. Of course, the names alone would not imply that they are different phenomena as there are many names associated with the *vrikolakas*, but the work of Juliet du Boulay suggests that the difference between them goes deeper than this. In her discussion on the *vrikolakas*, based on research carried out in a village in Euboea, she notes that the villagers distinguished between two categories of undissolved bodies. A body which was undissolved at the time of exhumation was not considered to be a *vrikolakas*, but 'a soul with sins'. Action was taken to set free the soul from the body in this case, whereas, when a *vrikolakas* revealed itself, urgent action was required to destroy it.¹⁷ A seventeenth-century source also makes this distinction between two types of undissolved body. Father Richard, a Jesuit missionary on the island of Santorini, follows his reports on the *vrikolakas* with the following passage:

¹⁵ Compare the sources in Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXII, p. 143 to those in XIII - XVI, pp. 149-157.

¹⁶ Ibid, ch. XVI, pp. 154-157, esp. p. 154.

¹⁷ Juliet du Boulay, 'The Greek Vampire: A Study of Cyclic Symbolism in Marriage and Death', *Man* 17 (1982), 222.

*‘There are other dead bodies in Greek cemeteries which, after fifteen or sixteen years – and sometimes twenty or thirty years, are found swollen up like balloons and when you throw or roll them on the ground they resound like drums; so they call them “doupi” [drum]. I can just assure you that the common opinion of the Greeks is that such swelling is the true mark of excommunication.’*¹⁸

The islanders clearly distinguished between the two on the grounds of the inflated drum-like appearance of the *tympaniaios*.¹⁹

Allatios’ experience with the undissolved body would seem to fall into this category on the grounds of its appearance. He describes the corpse as ‘round as a small bag’²⁰ and inflated to such an extent that the local youths used it as a trampoline until the priest stopped the disrespectful behaviour and closed the grave. This undissolved body, like those in Euboea, was discovered when the tomb was opened to inter another body, yet Allatios includes it in his chapter dealing with the *vrikolakas* proper. It falls at the end of the section which concentrates specifically on the *vrikolakas* and is followed by Allatios’ statement that ‘it is the greatest madness to deny that similar uncorrupted bodies sometimes are discovered in the tombs’.²¹ For Allatios, personal experience was very important for establishing the veracity of the phenomenon. The particular importance of eyewitness evidence was stressed in his introduction. The mind, he insists, is best equipped to deal with those things ‘on which it can make a certain rather than haphazard judgement because it perceives them with its own eyes.’²² Allatios’ encounter therefore provides him with the strongest proof of the existence of such bodies, that is, of the *vrikolakas*.

Moreover, he opens the following chapter by stating that ‘when the Greeks see similar bodies, which are discovered after death in cemeteries, undecayed and swollen, with skin stretched like a drum, they say that [these] are the bodies of the

¹⁸ Richard, *Relation*, pp. 224-225.

¹⁹ The inflated drum-like appearance of these corpses appear to distinguish them from the true *vrikolakas*.

²⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XIII, p. 148.

²¹ Ibid, ch. XIII, p. 115.

²² Ibid, ch. I, p. 114.

excommunicated'.²³ His own experience precedes this statement, implying it belongs to the *vrikolakas* class of revenant, rather than the *tympaniaios* which it resembles. In fact, Allatios does not really make a clear distinction between the two types of revenant. For him '*the vriculaca is indeed the corpse of the most evil and criminal of men: often excommunicated by their bishop... The skin is stretched like a drum, and makes a noise in the same way as a drum if struck. Wherefore it is said to be tympaniaios.*'²⁴ The two revenants are one and the same phenomenon.

How can this difference in perception be explained? Is Allatios wrong to class the two together, or has he noticed underlying similarities between the two? After all, beliefs do not exist in isolation. They belong to a system which as a whole encompasses the world view of its adherents. Do the *tympaniaios* and the *vrikolakas* have similar reasons underpinning them both? To understand the *vrikolakas* and the *tympaniaios* and the roles they play in this system it is necessary to look at the contexts in which they appear and the relationships they embody.

The *Tympaniaios*

The Greek sources which refer to the *tympaniaios* come out of an ecclesiastical context. Although the authors were not necessarily ordained, they were all deeply concerned with the state and government of the Orthodox church. Many of the extracts come from the *nomokanon* of Malaxos, which is one of the most important ecclesiastical legal texts of the early modern period. This is attributed to the sixteenth-century notary Manuel Malaxos. The *Historia politica Constantinopoleos* and the *Historia patriarchica Constantinopoleos* from which many of the other examples are drawn are also attributed to Malaxos, although it has been suggested that he was the copyist rather than the author. Christophoros Angelos, another of Allatios' sources, was also deeply concerned about the state of the church and this is the subject of his *De statu hodiernorum Graecorum*. Allatios also records a report

²³ Ibid, ch. XIV, p. 149.

²⁴ Ibid, ch. XII, p. 142.

on the phenomenon from Bishop Athanasius of Imbros, his contemporary.²⁵ This evidence shows that the belief was held and acted on by the higher clergy, and as such is likely to represent the official church viewpoint. Thus there was a wide acceptance of these beliefs at official level; but excommunication was no respecter of persons and the condition of the *tympaniaios* was not confined to the clerical elite; nor were the clergy the only ones to interpret it in this way. Bodies of lay folk were also discovered undissolved and their families related this condition to their excommunication. Rycaut relates an account given to him by a 'Candiot Kaloir':

*'The friends of the deceased, being willing and desirous that the Corps should rest in peace, and some ease given to the departed Soul, obtained a reprieve from the Clergy, and hope, that for a sum of Money (they being persons of a competent Estate) a Release might be purchased from the Excommunication under the hand of the Patriarch...Letters thereupon [were] sent to Constantinople, with this direction, that in case the Patriarch should condescend to take off the Excommunication, that the day, hour and minute that he signed the Remission should be inserted in the date.'*²⁶

The ceremony of mass was duly performed, prayers were said and the body suddenly started to disintegrate:

*'The hour and the minute of this dissolution was immediately noted and precisely observed, which being compared with the Date of the Patriarch's release, when it was signed at Constantinople, it was found exactly to agree with that moment in which the Body returned to Ashes.'*²⁷

This confirms how real the sanction of excommunication and its affects were to the laity, and also the efficacy of absolution in this matter.

For the *tympaniaios*, it was the excommunication of the body that prevented it from decaying. Ioannikos, Patriarch of Constantinople (1522-1545), died bound by anathema and was later discovered '*swollen like a drum* [lit. *tympaniaios*].'²⁸ Similarly Arsenios, Bishop of Monemvasia, died under excommunication without performing penance. His body was found so swollen and black that '*all who saw it were afraid and trembled*'.²⁹ Retardation of the natural processes of decay was one

²⁵ Ibid, ch. XV, p. 151.

²⁶ Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 281.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 281.

²⁸ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XVI, p. 153.

²⁹ Ibid, ch. XVI, p. 153.

of the deliberate consequences of the excommunication rite in its seventeenth-century form:

*'If they restore not to him that which is his own, and possess him peaceably of it, but suffer him to remain injured and damnified; let him be separated from the Lord God Creatour, and be accursed, and unpardoned, and undissolvable after death in this World, and in the other which is to come. Let wood, stones and iron be dissolved but not they....'*³⁰

The preservation of the body is indicative of the separation from God after death, for dissolution was essential in order to be resurrected and forgiven on the Last Day. The Canon for the Dead writes *'All those whose bodies are dissolved into the four elements, do thou refashion and raise up at thy coming, forgiving them all their offences committed in knowledge or in ignorance.'*³¹ Those who had not dissolved by Judgement Day, that is, those who had not been loosed, would not be forgiven; nor would they be resurrected. The earthly body, stained and damaged by sin was not fit to enter heaven. It had to decay and disintegrate so that a new, heavenly body could be fashioned on Judgement Day. Of course, this process was not necessary for those who had lived lives unsullied by sin. Saints' bodies did not decompose because they had no need to do so. Their bodies were perfect and so were already prepared for the kingdom of heaven.³² This explains the statement given to Allatios that *'[corpses] of the pious rest in the same condition as when they were alive and are greatly to be revered for their appearance and beauty.'*³³ The bodies of saints do not have the terrible appearance of the *tympaniaios* because they have acquired their heavenly form on earth. Despite this, many western commentators found the existence of both good and evil preserved bodies contradictory. The *Sieur du Mont* puzzles over why the Greeks always prayed for undissolved bodies whereas the Italians venerated them as saints.³⁴ Allatios too, uses the existence of these bodies to

³⁰ Angelos, *De statu*, p. 521; translation from Rycout, *Churches*, p. 274.

³¹ Eastern Orthodox Church, 'Canon for the dead', *Eastern Churches Review*, 8 (1976), 105-6.

³² P. Fedwick., 'Death and Dying in Byzantine Liturgical Traditions', *Eastern Churches Review*, 8 (1976), 159, explains that people whose bodies had become corrupted by sin, had to have their bodies destroyed before the final bodily resurrection.

³³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch.XVIII, p. 157.

³⁴ Du Mont, *New Voyage*, p. 295.

question the consistency of Orthodox beliefs.³⁵ To the Orthodox the matter is clear: saints look, smell and behave like saints, *tympaniaios* like *tympaniaios*.³⁶

Whereas saints' bodies were not preserved through any external force or authority, but as a consequence of their own piety, the *tympaniaios* remained undecayed through the bishop's power to bind and loose. Bishops had been given the power to bind and loose by Christ. Binding and loosing refers to the power of casting out from the church through excommunication and accepting back into the church through absolution and forgiveness. In the Gospels Christ says to his apostles, '*Whatever is bound on earth is bound in heaven, and whatever is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven.*'³⁷ The action of the bishops affects the progress of the soul after death. After death a bound soul is literally bound to the body. It cannot depart to be with God. It is tied to the world and to the body through its sins. Equally the body cannot disintegrate while the soul remains bound to it as the soul is eternal and immaterial. This interrelation between the material and immaterial is characteristic of Byzantine theology. In life the soul and body are an inseparable unit, and whatever is done to the soul is reflected in the body and vice versa. Thus in binding the soul, the body is also bound and fails to dissolve.

For the average mortal the period during which the soul left the body was a fraught one but essential for salvation. The soul was believed to be reluctant to leave the body and the worldly place that it once knew. Even after the soul had separated from the body it lingered around the people and places it knew during its life for forty days and in many places the windows were left open so it could come and go as it pleased. The separation from the world was a painful one for all involved. The Greek term for the departure of the soul is '*psychorrhageo*' and it suggests the struggle of the soul at the moment of departing from the body. The Orthodox marked this difficult and dangerous passage with a special service, called variously 'Order for letting the soul

³⁵ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XVII, p. 157.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Matt. 16: 19-20.

break loose', 'Office of the soul standing trial',³⁸ and 'Office at the parting of the soul from the body'.³⁹ In this rite the congregation helped the soul on its way through its prayers.

In the case of the *tympaniaios*, the soul and body, bound together by excommunication, failed to achieve this separation. Denoting as it does the failure to achieve forgiveness and peace in Christ, it was a source of great terror. The bishop of Monemvasia was so black and swollen like a drum '*that all who saw it were afraid and trembled*'.⁴⁰ In a second passage Malaxos gives another reason for this fear:

*'For just as their bodies are held fast and not consumed by the earth, so their souls are also bound shackles of the Devil and are punished for being corrupt. When, however, the body receives forgiveness, after being set free from the bond of execration, with God's good help, the soul is also set free from the shackles of the Devil and attains eternal life and that light which never knows the evening.'*⁴¹

This introduces a new aspect into the creation of a *tympaniaios*. Those whose souls were unable to leave were open to attack from the devil. This argument, based on the affinity which was supposed to exist between like things or things of like nature, was often put forward to explain their attraction to each other. An early example appears in the text of the fifth-century author, the Pseudo Dionysios the Areopagite. He argues that the Lord pours holy fragrances into the minds of his worshippers in proportion to their affinity with the divinity.⁴² Using the same logic, the author of a penitential states that pagans were sometimes infused with the spirit of the python, an animal closely associated with diabolic forces, due to their affinity with the devil.⁴³ Good is attracted to good and evil to evil; the devil was attracted to the

³⁸ Fedwick, 'Death', 153: standing trial points to the agony of the soul rather than to a moment of judgement.

³⁹ Fedwick, 'Death', 153.

⁴⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XVI, p. 152.

⁴¹ Ibid, ch. XIV, p. 150. Malaxos, *Historia politica Constantinopoleos*. Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae, (ed.) Immanuel Bekker, Bonn: E. Weber, 1849, pp. 48-50. Also quoted in Leo Allatios, *De Purg.*, p. 38.

⁴² Pseudo Dionysios, 'The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy' in *The Complete Works*, translated by Colm Luibheid, London: SPCK, 1987, 3: 4, 480 A pp. 228-229; Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. VI, p. 125.

⁴³ Mouzakis, 'Οι βρικόλακες, p. 69.

excommunicated soul because of its stains. In addition, the soul had been cast out of the church by means of the excommunication and no longer enjoyed its full protection, making it easier for the devil to attack.

In other sources, the devil did not enter the soul through his own volition alone, but with the permission of God, almost through his direction:

*'Those who truly are found excommunicated, that is, those whose bodies remain undissolved and intact, need absolution to set them free from the bonds of excommunication. For just as the body is found bound on earth, so also his soul is bound and is punished through the power of the Devil. When the body has been absolved and loosed from excommunication, God so willing, his soul is set free from the shackles of the devil and may partake of eternal life.'*⁴⁴

God is using the devil to punish the souls who cannot escape their bodies after death. This may shed light on the paragraph concerning Ioannikos, the Patriarch of Constantinople who was given *'the punishments that he merited'*.⁴⁵ At first sight it appears to apply to the act of excommunication itself, but, taken in conjunction with the passage above which is by the same author, it is a consequence of the excommunicated state. Arsenios, like Ioannikos, died excommunicated and it is clear that the treatment after death was directly related to his sin as he *'died consumed by bitterness without performing penance.'*⁴⁶ He had not atoned for his sins, and this was why the excommunication had not been lifted before he died. Thus God is using the devil to punish after death those who have failed to atone for their sins during life.

As well as indicating the punishment the deceased was undergoing, the failure of the body to dissolve drew the attention of the community to the perilous state of the soul. It urged them to procure an absolution for the soul in torment and to offer intercession for it. The characteristic appearance of the body advertised its plight and enabled it to achieve the assistance it required. In this sense the blackened body could be seen as a positive sign: through it the body would receive what it needed

⁴⁴ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XIV, p. 150.

⁴⁵ Ibid, ch. XVI, p. 153.

⁴⁶ Ibid, ch. XIV, p. 153.

and then be sure of heaven. In contrast, those who had been excommunicated and were found dissolved had no hope of salvation:

*'He who is justly and rationally and lawfully excommunicated by his bishop and after death is discovered dissolved, has no hope of salvation; not because he has transgressed the divine laws; but because he omitted to repent and failed to perform penance and to obtain forgiveness of his sins from the bishop by whom he had been excommunicated. For this reason he is found dissolved: he no longer has a hope of obtaining pardon because he is already participating in never ending punishment.'*⁴⁷

This soul had no second chance to obtain salvation. Following death, God has pronounced judgement and the soul has been sent straight to hell. In fact in both cases God is seen to be promulgating a partial judgement on the soul immediately after death. Either it is sinful but capable of entering heaven after a period of punishment through the instrument of the devil and an absolution from the church, or it has been condemned to everlasting damnation.

Although in many ways the *tympaniaios* is woven into the Orthodox beliefs, here this phenomenon comes into conflict with the Byzantine tradition. It does not fit with the evidence provided by the canon for the dead. There, all those who have disintegrated are assumed to have received forgiveness, whereas in the example above disintegration has the opposite meaning in the particular case of an excommunicated body. Rather than interpreting the dissolution as an example of God's ability to forgive sinners who repent, even though this repentance may not have been made obvious through penance, it is seen as an instant condemnation. Dissolution has become a sign that God has passed judgement and the soul has achieved its final resting place.

The *tympaniaios* and the doctrine of Purgatory

This schema bears a resemblance to the doctrine of Purgatory accepted by the western church, the third place between heaven and hell where the soul waited for the last Judgement and suffered temporarily for sins not atoned for during life. In this interpretation there are three places where the soul can be located after death: heaven,

⁴⁷ Ibid, ch. XIV, p. 150.

hell and trapped within the body on earth. This doctrine requires God to make a partial judgement on the fate of the soul immediately after death: the blessed, who have lived a blameless life, go straight to heaven; those he condemns go directly to hell; the middling sort, who have sinned but repented and can redeem themselves through penance are interred in a third place, Purgatory, mid-way between heaven and hell.⁴⁸ The doctrine of Purgatory was formally accepted by the church in the twelfth century and met a popular need. Purgatory arose from, and was made necessary by, the correlation between sins perpetrated and penance required in the western canon. Before the acceptance of Purgatory, those over-looking sins during life, or those who had not performed strict enough penance for their sin, risked suffering eternally in hell, as they had failed to perform satisfaction for their debt to God. With the advent of Purgatory, sinners could complete the required penance in the third place, before proceeding to heaven.

The *tympaniaios* too constitutes punishment of sinners, for only the excommunicated were afflicted. Their suffering began immediately after death when the demon entered the soul, but had a limited duration, ceasing on absolution. Under this interpretation the *tympaniaios* appears to fill the role of an Orthodox Purgatory. Allatios noted this similarity between Purgatory and the Greek revenant. His interpretation is provided in a commentary on the *vrikolakas*, rather than the *tympaniaios*, but this is not a problem as it merely reveals once again his amalgamation of the two kinds of revenant. 'Very often', he writes, 'the souls of the dead are thrown into a place hateful to them, like a prison, for the purpose of enduring torments prescribed by God.'⁴⁹ This happens to those who have 'held God in contempt' during their lives.⁵⁰ These terms are characteristic of a description of Purgatory.⁵¹ Allatios also understands the *tympaniaios* in terms of the satisfactory notion of penance on which Purgatory depends. He writes that people who become *tympaniaios* are those 'who bishops and priests of the Christian people lawfully expel from the community of the faithful because of any sin committed, [and] who, while

⁴⁸ Jacques le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, London: Scholar Press, 1984, pp. 224; 322-323.

⁴⁹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XIII, p. 145.

⁵⁰ Ibid, ch. XIII, p. 154.

⁵¹ Le Goff, *Purgatory*, p. 319.

they are alive did not receive correction to purify them of that fault... [These people] *do not dissolve into the ground but remain inflated like a drum* [Greek lit: *tympaniaios*].⁵² The *tympaniaios*, like Purgatory, was a place where souls are imprisoned and punished for the sins they had not atoned for during life.

This understanding of the *tympaniaios* appears again in Allatios' work on Purgatory. He considers that the existence of the *tympaniaios* and the remission of sins after death, which the undissolved body implies, prove that the Greeks do have Purgatory. He argues that there must be another place between heaven and hell, because in hell there will be no redemption and in heaven no punishment; since the Greeks do have punishment of sins after death, they also must have Purgatory.⁵³ Again in chapter XVII of the *De opinationibus* he criticises problems in the Greek position resulting from their denial of Purgatory. Since the Greeks allow that actions of the living aid the dead, they either must admit the existence of Purgatory, or allow the unacceptable view that these suffering souls are released from hell.⁵⁴

The *tympaniaios* cannot completely mirror Purgatory, however, for it does not constitute a separate third place. Instead, the earth becomes the transitional location. The earth, like Purgatory, is a midway point situated between heaven and hell, a place of temporary suffering where good and evil are both active. Life on earth shares many characteristics with Purgatory, but it is a transitional world for the living, not for the dead. As there is no Purgatory in Orthodox Christianity, the earth became the transitional place for the dead as well. This was also the case in the West before Purgatory was introduced. After the twelfth century, and with the preaching of the purgatorial doctrine, spirits largely disappeared, as souls now were confined within the prison of Purgatory, which also acted as a waiting room for souls before they received their final resting places at the time of the Last Judgement. Although spirits began to reappear again in the seventeenth century, their nature had changed.

⁵² Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XVI, p. 154.

⁵³ Leo Allatios, *De Purg.*, pp. 41-42.

⁵⁴ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XVII, p. 157.

They now came to warn about the perils of Purgatory and provide an insight into life after death.⁵⁵

Sin and the afterlife: the Orthodox perspective

The Orthodox, however, never adopted the doctrine of Purgatory. When the matter was first raised at an official level during the Council of Lyons in 1274, it proved a stumbling block to the discussion over the union of churches and the final formulation signed made no mention of Purgatory as a third place or containing fire.⁵⁶ The Council of Florence/Ferrara (1439), where union was once again on the agenda, did not arrive at a new formulation and the doctrine of Purgatory continued to be seen as a point of difference between the two churches.⁵⁷ The statement of Mark of Ephesus at the council confirmed that the Greeks did not believe in a third place between heaven and hell, but that they did believe in punishment after death and that prayers of the living could assist the dead. However, these councils revealed that among the Greek theologians there was no clear, agreed view on what happened to souls immediately after death.⁵⁸ At the Council of Florence/Ferrara, the churchman Bessarion declined to discuss the matter on the grounds that he had nothing to say on it and not all agreed with the arguments put forward by Mark of Ephesus.⁵⁹ Although most agreed that souls did not achieve their final resting place before the last Judgement and that there were three different states of souls, there was no agreement on whether these souls existed together or in two or three different places after death.⁶⁰

Many of the ideas contained in the doctrine of Purgatory sit oddly with the Byzantine approach to the afterlife. It was difficult for the Orthodox to come to a final conclusion on the subject given the apophatic nature of their theology. Neither the Gospels nor the church fathers made any reference to a third place: mankind had no

⁵⁵ Le Goff, *Purgatory*, p. 294.

⁵⁶ Robert Ombres, *The Theology of Purgatory*, Butler, Wisconsin: Clergy Book Service, 1978, p. 44.

⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 45.

⁵⁸ J. Gill, *The Council of Florence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, pp. 119-120.

⁵⁹ Ibid, pp. 120-121.

⁶⁰ Ware, *Argenti*, p. 144.

information on the whereabouts of the soul after death and should not discuss the unknowable.⁶¹ This meant that in Orthodox theology there was no clear direction on the fate of souls immediately after death. Most theologians denied that there was a third place where punishment was suffered temporarily.

Despite the absence of the doctrine of Purgatory in Orthodoxy, other beliefs did exist on the subject of the progress of the soul in the afterlife: the soul had to pass through toll gates where it underwent ordeals before arriving at a resting place, either in the abyss of Hades or in the bosom of Abraham, to await the Final Judgement. These were not separate places in the way Purgatory is, but were closely associated with Heaven or Hell. Nor was there a stress on atonement in the western sense. The emphasis fell on confession and repentance rather than a need to provide satisfaction for sins in the western sense. For restoration to God only true contrition and repentance were necessary.⁶²

The Dream of Gregory contained in the tenth-century *Life* of Basil the Younger written by Gregory of Thrace illustrates the progress of the soul.⁶³ After death the souls had to pass through a number of toll gates where they were interrogated by angels and devils about their sins. In Gregory's dream the nun Theodora easily passed through gates where she was interrogated about sins she had confessed, for these could no longer be held against her.⁶⁴ The difficulty came when she was asked about sins she had omitted to confess. However, here Theodora was helped on her way by a bag of gold from her spiritual father who had given it to her guardians saying: '*Receive this and with them redeem her when you come to the toll gates of the air, for by the grace of Christ I am rich enough and have enough and to spare for my soul.*'⁶⁵ Just as a bag of gold would ease the passage of a worldly traveller

⁶¹ Robert Ombres, 'Latins and Greeks in Debate over Purgatory, 1230-1439', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35 (1984), p. 9; Gill, *Council of Florence*, p. 121.

⁶² George Every, 'Toll Gates on the Air Way', *Eastern Churches Review* 8 (1976), 149.

⁶³ This occurs in 'Life of St Basil the Younger', *Acta Sanctorum Martii* iii, Paris, 1668, pp. 667-81, (Latin) 22-39 (Greek). A fuller version appears in *Sbornik otdeleniia russkago iazyka i slovesnosti*, vol. XLVI, Academia scientiarum imperialis, St Petersburg, 1890, pp. 10-37 in no 6 at the end of the volume. For a discussion of this text Every, 'Toll Gates', 139-51.

⁶⁴ Every, 'Toll Gates', 142.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 145.

through customs, so it would aid the journey of the soul. The role of the spiritual father was vital as he could take on the burden of the sins of his spiritual son or daughter and ease their path after death with his own virtue.

The role of the spiritual father illustrated here builds on the comments in the 'Order for Confession and Penance' of the Pseudo John the Faster, which became the basis for future *nomokanones*. In this text the confessor urges the sinner to tell him of his sins because through his present shame in confession he will remove his future shame when he is forced to face up to his sins after death.⁶⁶ By confessing his sins now, he avoids the difficulties in the after-life, not only because of his true repentance, but also because of the responsibility that the confessor then assumes for the confessed sins. The origin of this idea can be seen in the works of the sixth-century monk, John Klimakos, who wrote that '*if someone has obeyed their spiritual father, it is not him but his director who is called to account*'.⁶⁷ This view persisted and is emphasised by St Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022), in his works on the relationship between the sinner and confessor.⁶⁸ Thus, the penitent could be aided by his spiritual father, as Theodora was aided by hers. The emphasis is on repentance and spiritual growth rather than the performance of penance. If the soul passed through all the toll gates it rested in the lower reaches of heaven, or 'Abraham's bosom', until the Last Judgement Day. There the soul was able to complete its repentance, not penance, and continue to grow spiritually. There was no sense of punishment after death for those sins which had been repented and this distinguishes the Byzantine view of the fate of the middling souls from that expressed in western Purgatory. Purgatory was specifically for those who had repented of but not atoned sufficiently for the sins. Instead, in the 'Dream of Gregory', it was possible to move towards a greater understanding of God after death under the guidance of the spiritual father.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Pseudo John the Faster, 'Ἀκολουθία', col. 1892.

⁶⁷ John Klimakos, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, translation by Colm Luibheid and Norman Russell, London: SPCK, 1982, 3: 665 D p. 87.

⁶⁸ H. J. M. Turner St. Symeon the New Theologian and Spiritual Fatherhood, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990, p. 125.

⁶⁹ Meyendorff, *Theology*, p. 220-221.

The *tympaniaios* also encapsulates a view of the soul after death, but it is a very different vision. It is exclusively concerned with sinners who have not atoned after excommunication, whereas the dream of Gregory follows the journey of an ordinary man, and reveals the help provided to him by his spiritual father, who, notably, is not a member of the secular church but a monk. The former account, although containing a warning, is in essence hopeful. It is possible to achieve a place in heaven, even if you do sin, for your spiritual father will carry you along by his virtue. The latter, however, is much bleaker. Sins must be atoned for; the debt to God, and to the church, must be paid.

This satisfactory notion of penance that is apparent in Allatios' translations of the extracts relating to the *tympaniaios* is something new in Orthodoxy. In the Orthodox tradition confession and repentance alone were necessary to obtain forgiveness. There was no separation between guilt and debt as there was in the West: once the sinner had repented there was no outstanding debt to be repaid. This was one of the main stumbling blocks to the acceptance of Purgatory. At Ferrara and Florence, the theologians could not admit that the repentant had to be punished: in the Catholic notion, Purgatory contained those souls who had repented while on earth, but failed to perform the required value of penance and so had not wiped the debt. The time in Purgatory enabled him/her to do this. The unrepentant went to hell.

Moreover, at the beginning of the Ottoman period, there was no Greek word for 'satisfaction' in the western sense. The Greek term was only developed by Patriarch Gennadios II⁷⁰ who translated the Latin word *satisfactio* literally into Greek in his attempt to explain the differences between Greek and Orthodox doctrines of penance. Even here, his interpretation of satisfaction is not identical to the Catholic doctrine: it is repentance, contrition and spiritual healing which are important, not penance and payment of a debt.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Gennadios II Scholarius 1) 1454-1456; 2) 1462-1463; 3) 1464-1465.

⁷¹ Gennadios II, Patriarch of Constantinople, 'Etat des ames intermédiaires' in Louis Petit, X. A. Sideridas, Martin Jugie (eds.), *Oeuvres complètes de Georges Scholarios*, vol. 1, Paris: Maison de la bonne presse, 1928, p. 536; Every, 'Toll Gates', 139.

The Catholic understanding of the relationship between sin and the afterlife influenced Allatios' understanding and, consequently, his translation of the Greek excerpts in the *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinionibus*. He places the emphasis on the performance of penance. He writes of the Bishop Arsenios of Monemvasia who died in an excommunicated state that he died under excommunication '*nulla poenitenita acta*' i.e. '*without performing penance*'. The emphasis lies on penance. The Greek text however has a different emphasis and describes the sinner as '*ἀμετανόητος*' or '*unrepentant*'.⁷² Again, in another passage Allatios translates '*ὡς μὴν ἐπιστραφῇ, καὶ ἔλθῃ εἰς μετάνοιαν*' i.e. '*not turning and coming to repentance*' with '*sed ne, conversus et poenitentiam agens*' i.e. '*not turning and performing penance*'.⁷³ Most significant is his paraphrase of the passage from the *Historia politica Constantinopoleos*. He reports that the body has been preserved as a *tympaniaios* because the sinner '*omitted to repent and failed to perform penance*'; that is '*non emendantur ut expientur ab illo lapsu*'.⁷⁴ The Greek, however, merely describes the sinner as excommunicated and requiring the forgiveness of the community. Allatios has interpreted the idea of forgiveness in western terms of satisfaction. Through Allatios' translations the Greek stress on repentance has been transformed into a Latin emphasis on penance, bringing the *tympaniaios* closer to the Catholic conception of Purgatory.

Developments affecting the Orthodox interpretation of the *tympaniaios*

This interpretation of the *tympaniaios* in terms of Purgatory is not purely the result of Allatios' interpretation. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Greek theological world was in turmoil over the issue of Purgatory. A plethora of different opinions existed on the subject, with many protagonists changing sides in the debate. The Patriarch of Constantinople Meletios Pigas (1597-1598) completely rejected the idea of satisfactory penance. God's forgiveness was complete and once the sinner was truly repentant no penance was required by God. Christ's sacrifice was for the

⁷² Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XVI, p. 153. Latin: lines 21-22; Greek: line 19.

⁷³ Ibid, ch. XIV, Latin: p. 150, line 14; Greek: p. 149, line 31.

⁷⁴ Ibid, ch. XIV, p. 150. For the Greek see Malaxos, *Historia politica*, pp. 48-49.

sins of all, and to require additional penance for redemption was to slight his suffering.⁷⁵ It follows that for him there was no Purgatory, but he did accept the existence of the bosom of Abraham and the chasm of Hades, and as such was in agreement with the earlier dream of Gregory.⁷⁶ Although Pigas continued in the Byzantine tradition, others are closer to the Catholic doctrine. At the other end of the scale is the first confession of Peter Moghila, Metropolitan of Kiev (1633-47), where he affirms the particular judgement following death, and the existence of a third place between heaven and hell.⁷⁷ The eastern church councils were equally indecisive on the issue. In 1642 the Council of Jassy accepted the revised version of Peter Moghila's confession of faith, which rejected a particular judgement after death, but accepted that a soul was sometimes released from hell, but not that this occurred as a consequence of expiatory punishment.⁷⁸ In contrast, the Council of Jerusalem 1672, one of the most important of the seventeenth-century councils, upheld the doctrine of Purgatory and the expiatory nature of the penances there performed following the first confession of Dositheos, Patriarch of Jerusalem.⁷⁹ Thus it maintained the separation which exists in the Catholic scheme between the guilt that is absolved through repentance and the debt that is atoned for through penance. The Council of Constantinople half a century later rejected the existence of a third place, but accepted that there were places in the lower reaches of heaven, and upper strata of hell where satisfaction could be performed.⁸⁰

These discussions over the idea of Purgatory show the powerful influence of Catholic doctrine during this period. The Catholic approach came on more than one front. After the fall of Constantinople, increasing numbers of Orthodox clergy were forced to attend the Catholic colleges of Rome and Venice through lack of provision in Greece. Most colleges taught Catholic dogma and the Orthodox college was greatly over-subscribed. As a consequence, most were taught Catholic rather than Orthodox

⁷⁵ Ware, *Argenti*, 1964, p. 150.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 143,

⁷⁷ Martin Jugie (ed.), *Theologia Dogmatica Christianorum Orientalium*, 5 vols, vol iv *Theologiae Dogmaticae Graeco-Russorum Expositio*, Paris, 1931, p. 20; Ware, *Argenti*, p. 143.

⁷⁸ Moghila, *Confession*, q. 64, p. 54; Ware, *Argenti*, p. 150.

⁷⁹ Dositheos, *Synod*, Decree XVIII, p. 150. Ware, *Argenti*, p. 151.

⁸⁰ Ware, *Argenti*, p. 146.

doctrine and unsurprisingly many who returned to the East were influenced by their experience, and showed traces of their Catholic training in their thinking. The increased contact with Catholicism, both in the schools and through the Catholic missionary activity, forced the theologians to examine their position on the various points of difference between the two churches. These were well known and many treatises appeared on the subject. The debate which had long existed between the Orthodox and Catholic was heightened by the entrance into the fray of the reformed churches. After the Council of Trent, Luther moved increasingly further away from the doctrine, finally rejecting it altogether, and his followers maintained the latter position.⁸¹ Both Protestant and Catholic churches were interested in the doctrine of the Greeks, which seemed neither to affirm nor deny Purgatory absolutely, allowing as it did the efficacy of intercessory prayers for the dead, while rejecting a particular judgement and the existence of a third place. The adherence of the Greeks would have been a great prize in the battle among the two western churches. Although neither western church particularly admired the doctrines of the Orthodox church, it was considered to be the oldest, and in some ways the closest to the early church. As such it would have brought with it great moral authority, and added to the claims of the victor.

At a time when Catholic influence was so strong it is not surprising that it is not only Allatios' translations which suggest an understanding of the *tympaniaios* in terms of Purgatory. There is also a tension between two interpretations of the state of those who become *tympaniaios*. In canon 80 of the *nomokanon* those who are excommunicated but found dissolved after death are the unrepentant who do not deserve forgiveness. However, Arsenios, Bishop of Monemvasia, died unrepentant (*ἀμετανόητος*) and his corpse was discovered undecayed. What then is the distinction between the two cases? If the unrepentant excommunicates dissolve, those who remain undissolved must have repented, but somehow remained unworthy of forgiveness. The implication is that they have repented but failed to perform penance. The period of punishment after death through the *tympaniaios* then applies

⁸¹ Ombres, *Theology of Purgatory*, pp. 46-47; Robert Ombres, 'Images of Healing', 137.

specifically to the repentant souls. It is clear that the beliefs concerning sin, penance and the fate of the soul after death must have changed or at least diversified substantially by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This must have changed for this view of the *tympaniaios* to make sense within the system. This development is eased by the flexible character of the Greek words in this area in which the idea of penance and repentance is combined as a result of their inseparable nature in earlier Orthodox theology.

There are accounts of the excommunicated body which come from the Byzantine period. Allatios quotes what he believes to be an account from Cassian, relating to the excommunication of a bishop who failed to agree with the rest at one of the church councils. He was excommunicated and his body remained undissolved until the bishops of a later council absolved him. Unfortunately, this does not come from any of the extant works of John Cassian and perhaps is the work of a later author of the same name. Allatios also provides the example of the most famous Byzantine *tympaniaios*, that of the emperor Michael VIII Paleologos (1259-1282), who was cast out of the Orthodox Church for his attempts to bring about union with the Catholic church at the Council of Lyons.⁸² In both of these cases the implication is that the individual was unforgiven and unrepentant. There are no cases where the excommunicate dissolves, indicating his instant departure to hell.

Moreover, it is also clear that the *tympaniaios* never achieved the importance during Byzantine times that it did in the later periods. Psellos makes no mention of it in his corpus of texts of popular beliefs. Balsamon, the twelfth-century canonist, does not discuss the problem even though he deals with the question of who should absolve an excommunicated person. He concludes that, although in theory this could be performed by any bishop, in practice it is advisable to encourage the penitent to seek absolution from the same man who bound him, to prevent it becoming too easy to obtain.⁸³ His influence here can be seen in many *nomokanones* which state this as a

⁸² Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XVIII, p. 157.

⁸³ G. A. Rhalles & M. Potles (eds.), *Σύνταγμα τῶν Θείων καὶ ἱερῶν κανόνων*, Athens: vol 2, 1852, p. 27.

condition for absolution.⁸⁴ Sometimes this prescription could have dire effects, and not only on the excommunicated person. A certain Bishop Rezepius, had excommunicated another, but subsequently converted to Islam. He was persuaded to renounce this conversion in order to release the one he had excommunicated. Consequently he was put to death by the Islamic authorities as an apostate.⁸⁵ Even though this question is closely connected to the problem of *tympaniaios* Balsamon makes no mention of the undissolved body. This suggests that it was not considered to be part of the official church doctrine at this time, whereas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it is difficult to mention excommunication without making reference to this consequence of it. In contrast, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there is an explosion in the number of instances of the *tympaniaios* both in Greek histories and travellers tales, as well as the marked interest displayed by the *nomokanones*. In order to discover what brought about this change, the position of the church in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries needs to be discussed and, in particular, its relationship with the laity.

The Orthodox laity and the Catholic church

Not only were the higher clergy involved in theological debate, but the laity were approached by Catholic missionaries. The great missionary orders of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries established firm bases both on the mainland and the islands, founding churches and sometimes schools. At first the relationship between the two churches was good. The local priests on the islands had neither the means nor the education of the missionaries and on the whole welcomed the resources that they brought with them. There are many reports of joint processions and sharing of churches during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In the mid-seventeenth century the relationship began to sour as the Orthodox hierarchy gradually realised that many of its members were making private confessions of faith. Despite promulgations of the pope forbidding the practice, missionaries allowed converts to make a private confession of faith and to continue attending the Orthodox liturgy. It is difficult to establish the level of doctrine communicated to the

⁸⁴ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XIV, p. 150.

⁸⁵ Ibid, ch. XV, p. 152.

new congregations as missionaries did not require converts to have an understanding of Catholic doctrine before conversion, and, at any rate the missionaries' instructions were to avoid contentious areas of doctrine. The converts were treated rather as lapsed Catholics requiring gentle persuasion and encouragement.⁸⁶

Of course, it is also difficult to assess the level of lay knowledge of Orthodox doctrine. It is unlikely that the level would have been high, as the priests themselves scarcely had any education, but lack of knowledge of doctrine does not imply that church teaching had no influence. Both the Catholic and Orthodox churches could guide the beliefs of the laity through pastoral work without explicitly stating a doctrine. For example, Father Richard tells of one Iannetis Anapliotis, who was afraid that he would become a *vrikolakas* after death. He confessed this fear to one of the Jesuits, who told him to give money to charity, and make restitution for his debts. If he did this, his confessor implied, he would not become a *vrikolakas*.⁸⁷ The confessor emphasised the relationship between restitution and salvation, and, conversely, the state of moral debt and suffering.

This example also shows how the position of the Orthodox church as arbiter of salvation had come under challenge from the missionaries. It was to the missionary that Iannetis turned for advice concerning his salvation, not to an Orthodox monk or priest. The Catholic church was seen as an alternative source of supernatural power and guidance, and in some cases as more effective than the traditional church. Unfortunately Iannetis' actions did not have the desired effect and he returned as a *vrikolakas* after his death. Nevertheless, Richard records that Iannetis' cousin,

*'one of the most important Greeks [of the island], in fear of appearing in this guise after his death wants to be buried in our church, persuaded that the presence of the holy sacrament and the sanctity of the place will deter the demons from approaching his body.'*⁸⁸

He believed the Catholic church to be more powerful in preventing demonic attack, which also suggests that they were more powerful in carrying out the will of God.

⁸⁶ Charles A. Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire 1453-1923*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 114-5.

⁸⁷ Richard, *Relation*, p. 218.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 217.

Orthodox theology, under pressure from Catholic doctrine, unable to explain the fate of the soul after death, came under increasing pressure from the Catholic missionaries. Better educated, trained, and funded, they could appeal to the laity and spread their beliefs through pastoral work. Thus the external pressure of Catholicism encouraged a change in approach to sin and penance.

Yet the Catholic challenge was not the only one facing the Orthodox church at this time. This challenge to its authority was accompanied by an extension of its worldly power at the outset of the Ottoman period. The structure of the Ottoman state forced the church to assume greater jurisdictional powers and this led to a change in the relationship with its congregation. Under the Ottoman system of government the people were divided up according to their religion and the church was the body through which the Turks governed the Greek population.⁸⁹ In addition to this political role, the church had a judicial one and was allowed to deal with civil and financial cases between Christians as well as ecclesiastical matters. In this way, the Orthodox church assumed civil as well as ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The ecclesiastical court was not an innovation: during the thirteenth century with the breakdown of imperial authority following the Latin conquest there is evidence that bishops assumed a greater role in legal matters as they presided over cases involving their own, priests and monks, and also cases involving murder. As murder consisted of taking the God-given gift of life, it had also qualified for the ecclesiastical courts.⁹⁰ During the Tourkokratia the church was one of several jurisdictional authorities which included the Turkish courts and the local courts run by the Catholic rulers of the islands. The *nomokanon* of Malaxos cited by Allatios and the fourteenth-century *Hexabiblos* of Harmenopoulos were the most widely used bodies of ecclesiastical law during the period.⁹¹ The church did not have a wide range of sanctions to apply.

⁸⁹ Theodore H. Papadopoulos *Studies and Documents Relating to the History of the Greek Church and People under Turkish Domination*, New York: AMS Press, 1952, pp.7; 9; Runciman, *Great Church*, p. 20.

⁹⁰ Ruth Macrides, 'Killing and Asylum and the Law in Byzantium', *Speculum* 63 (1988), 518.

⁹¹ N. Vlachos, 'La Relation des Grecs asservis avec l'état musulman souverain' in *1453-1953 Le 500^{ème} Anniversaire de la Prise de Constantinople* (L'Hellenisme Contemporaine, 2^{ème} série), Athens 28 Mai 1953, p. 140.

Except on rare occasions when it was backed up by the Turkish authorities, the church had to rely on the moral sanction of excommunication.⁹² The litigants could choose to take their case before the Islamic courts but the justice there was reputed to be uncertain and the financial cost heavy. Rather than face this ordeal, most chose to go before the ecclesiastical courts, which had a reputation for fairness.⁹³

In civil cases the court proceedings did not follow a particular formal procedure and both the evidence and the judgement were covered by oath. The defendant was often asked to take an oath with respect to his innocence, especially if no evidence existed. This oath was bound by a threat of excommunication. Sometimes the whole court was bound under pain of excommunication which would apply to any who perjured themselves. This sanction was also used to ensure adherence to the judgement. Although the church was able to threaten prison in some cases, it usually fell back on ecclesiastical sanctions. This is illustrated by the involvement of the church in the case of Laskaris, a Greek furrier. He was excommunicated should he transgress his agreement with Iasaph Saparta, a Jew. It is important to realise that he was not merely threatened with excommunication. The ceremony had been carried out, but the sanction would only come into force if the agreement was broken.⁹⁴

Excommunication was a very flexible sanction. Whether the name of the culprit was known or not the Lord, who saw all, could be guaranteed to carry out the sentence if required. It could also be used to apply to future as well as past deeds, and would come into force if the required action was not performed. It could be used at all stages of the judicial process. Thus it was an eminently practical method of ensuring justice and carrying out legal responsibilities, and in the above case the sanction was to come into force only if the settlement was broken. It applied to some hypothetical future event. It was also used in this sense when it was attached to legal rulings. In

⁹²Ibid, 141.

⁹³ Vapori, 'Civil Jurisdiction', 154; Vlachos, 'La Relation', p. 141; Jacques Visvizes,

¹ 'L'Administration communale des Grecs pendant la domination Turque', in *1453-1953 Le 500^{ème} Anniversaire de la Prise de Constantinople* (L'Hellenisme Contemporaine, 2^{ème} série), Athens 28 Mai 1953, pp. 233-234.

⁹⁴ Vapori, 'Civil Jurisdiction', 154-160.

1701 the Patriarch Kallinikos legislated on excessive dowries, and his ruling was followed by a threat of excommunication for those who transgressed.⁹⁵ Unlike the earthly penalties attached to breaking laws, excommunication needed no further court action for the punishment to take effect. Anyone contravening such a decision should consider himself or herself to be excommunicated.

Excommunication could also be applied to events in the past where the church was unsure whether or not the defendant had committed the crime. The Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios remonstrated with a woman who had set up a brothel outside the patriarchal palace. The woman *'incited by the devil, accused the patriarch...of trying to force her into evil deeds.'* He responded with an excommunication. One day, after he had performed the usual liturgy, he said

*'that if those words which the priest's widow had said against him were true, he prayed that she would be pardoned by God for it and be given happiness, and that her body would be dissolved. However, if she had falsely accused him, having made up a most unworthy charge, he would consign her to the will and judgement of the omnipotent God, having banished her from the holy flock of the pious, deprived of forgiveness and [with her body] indissoluble.'*⁹⁶

The judgement of God was exercised; she died forty days later and her body indeed remained undissolved for many years. In this example the church is using the omniscience of the Lord to exercise judgement.

The sanction of excommunication could also stretch to those beyond the worldly arm of the church. However far the excommunicated person ran, he could not escape. A man committed a crime in Morea and fled far away to the isle of Milos, *'where though he avoided the hand of Justice, yet could not avoid the Sentence of Excommunication, from which he could not more fly, than from the conviction of his own Conscience or the guilt which ever attended him'*.⁹⁷ The use of excommunication extended the justice and authority of the church to all regions of earth, as well as to heaven.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 157.

⁹⁶ For this account see Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, p. 118-124; Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XVI, pp. 154-155.

⁹⁷ Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 279.

Earthly justice was pursued by the Lord through the church in a much more active way than before and it was believed to be effective. Other parties would request excommunications to be carried out to restore order. For example, during the seventeenth century Mykonos was a target for pirates. The inhabitants complained to the Porte, but the Pasha at Chios was prevented from going to Mykonos by the actions of the corsairs. One day a captain who had previously been captured by pirates sailed to Chios and returned with the Pasha who was determined to apprehend the man who had stolen the boat. He ordered the Vecciardi (the Italian ruling council of Mykonos) to bring him in, and they in response ordered the priests to excommunicate all those who would conceal him.⁹⁸ Villagers too would pay for excommunications to be carried out by the local priest. A traveller described the movement of a procession up the road headed by the priest, who was preceded by a large crucifix and a black banner. The excommunication took place in public, in front of the house of the one who was to be excommunicated.⁹⁹ The whole community was aware of the crime and the excommunication, and was often involved in the procession. The casting out from the church thus became a communal act, which casts out from worldly as well as spiritual communication.

The sanction of excommunication therefore was considered to be highly efficacious, but in order to work it relied on the acknowledgement of the power of the church. Many western travellers report, and sometimes admire, the fear with which the laity regarded excommunication. Rycaut speaks about the excommunication, '*of which they so generally stand in fear that the most profligate and obdurate conscience in other matters startles at this sentence*'.¹⁰⁰ This wide use of excommunication, and the fear that it brought with it, developed on account of the new challenges facing the church in the extension of its jurisdiction. This new situation also brought changes in the purpose of excommunication and penance. The position of the Byzantine church, where the purpose of excommunication was seen more in terms of spiritual healing

⁹⁸ Randolph, *Present State*, p. 15.

⁹⁹ Grasset, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 22.

¹⁰⁰ Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 271.

and growth, had moved to one where the punitive nature of excommunication was emphasised. Previously the bishop or monk had taken into account the motivation, needs and circumstances in which the sin had occurred when assessing the excommunication period and the penance. This consideration disappeared altogether with the blanket excommunications associated with the oath taking, and legal rulings.

Excommunication was used as a sanction to help to regulate lay society, and as a matter of course had to display a greater concern about the community, which reduced the focus on the individual. The justice dispensed by the church had to satisfy the requirements of earthly justice, and became more retributive in character. Ecclesiastical sanctions performed a social function to a much greater extent than before, when the treatment, sin, and penance largely concerned personal and private sins. A sense of equivalence was established between the sin/crime and the penance/punishment. The punishment was only ended when reparation was made. Similarly, forgiveness too could only be obtained when full reparation was made - contrition for wrong doing was no longer sufficient. A new concept of sin and penance was required to cover these needs, one which stressed the need to provide satisfaction for wrongs, and certain punishment for those who failed. The ideology surrounding it had to be especially powerful, for the church had few other sanctions that it could apply if excommunication failed to have the desired effect.

The church demonstrated its authority through excommunication. Indeed, the *tympaniaios*, the product of excommunication, was used to display the power of Orthodoxy. The sultan, hearing about the bloated bodies of the excommunicated, desired the patriarch to find one and display his power in causing it to dissolve. The Patriarch Maximos, after puzzling for many days, eventually discovered the corpse of an excommunicated woman. By order of the Sultan this corpse was shut up and sealed in the coffin. Then she was brought before the patriarch, who recited the absolution over her. *'Behold then, a great miracle of God! Behold, the divine mercy and the love which hangs over humankind! "The miracle," he said "is great and*

amazing and occurred at that hour through divine influence."¹⁰¹ As soon as the patriarch pronounced the absolution the body was heard to make a cracking noise, characteristic of the process of dissolution and all those who were watching '*gave thanks to God with tears for producing great and amazing miracles.*'¹⁰² The patriarch's ability to bring about the dissolution of the body was acclaimed as a miracle, and so emphasised the grace conferred upon him by the Lord. The miracle did not only bring credit to him, however, but to the whole Orthodox church. When the coffin was opened in front of the sultan, the body was found to be dissolved in the coffin and '*hearing all this, the Sultan was astounded beyond measure and was amazed at such a miracle. "Indeed the Christian religion", he said "is true without a doubt.*'"¹⁰³ Through such a demonstration of its spiritual power the church strived to prove the truth of its faith.

The *tympaniaios* is closely linked to the vicissitudes of the Orthodox church at this period. It certainly displays the growing influence of the Catholic doctrines on Orthodox theology but also, in an environment where the authority of the church over worldly matters has increased, its appearance emphasises the power of the church over the body and material things. The church is master of the world here as well as of heavenly matters, and so has control over all the transactions that occur on the earth. Unlike the creation of the *vrikolakas*, the church plays an active role in the creation of the *tympaniaios*. The devil is only allowed to enter designated bodies, he has no power to enter those within the fold of the church. With the *tympaniaios*, the church is stating its claim to absolute power within the earthly realm.

Of course the church's claims to great power must not be taken at face value. Its extension of worldly power is accompanied by the minimum of temporal support with which to exercise it. It is forced to fall back on ecclesiastical sanctions. The more it is threatened, the more strident its claims become. Fear of excommunication

¹⁰¹ This and the following excerpts are taken from Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, p. 118-124; Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XVI, p. 155.

¹⁰² Ibid, ch. XVI, p. 156.

¹⁰³ Ibid, ch. XVI, p. 156.

is needed to keep the Orthodox on the straight and narrow. This emphasis occurs at the same time as its spiritual power is challenged by the entrance of the missionaries and by the attractions posed by a conversion to Islam. Despite the acknowledgement of power that fear of excommunication indicates, the example from Richard proves that the church was under threat from missionary activity. The *tympaniaios* provides an opportunity for the Orthodox church to demonstrate its spiritual power in terms of binding and loosing. The power given to the church by Christ is visible and can be used to impress others with the truth of their belief. The more threatened they are the more strident claims they make.

The *Vrikolakas*

The *tympaniaios* is closely tied up with the development of church doctrines. It develops alongside them, in response to the specific challenges posed to the church during this period. However, there are other interpretations of the undissolved body and attention will now be turned to the *vrikolakas*, and its place in the beliefs of seventeenth-century Greece.

Much of the evidence for the *vrikolakas* comes from *nomokanones*. These consist of discussions of various aspects of life considered sinful by the church. They provide a guide for monks and secular clergy as to how to approach such matters and the penances which should be given. Often they are attributed to an ecclesiastical figure from the early church and this confers authority on the advice they contain. The majority refers to John the Faster, the sixth-century Patriarch of Constantinople. The nature of the source presents a problem. As *nomokanones* were usually compiled by copying from earlier texts, it is difficult to assess how far the information contained within them reflects contemporary concerns. Fortunately the earliest editions of the *nomokanon* which date to the ninth century do not mention the *vrikolakas*, nor is there any evidence of it from the mid-Byzantine period. Had the belief been common Psellos would have included it in his treatises on popular beliefs and his failure to discuss it suggests that it was unknown, likewise, its omission from the early *nomokanones*. In contrast, there is a great profusion of information on the *vrikolakas* from *nomokanones* produced from the mid-fifteenth century onwards. This points to the later years of the Byzantine Empire and the early Ottoman period as the time when the belief made an appearance, or at least when it claimed the attention of the ecclesiastical authors. However, it is in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that the *vrikolakas* becomes prominent in the sources. In other words, in discussing the *vrikolakas* the compilers of *nomokanones* of this period were expressing a current concern, both of the church and of the laity.

Although evidence for the *vrikolakas*, like that for the *tympaniaios*, occurs in ecclesiastical sources, the attitude displayed towards these two phenomena was totally different. While the church supported the belief in the *tympaniaios*, it was extremely hostile to that of the *vrikolakas*: a penance of six years was laid down for those who disobeyed the ecclesiastical proscriptions and burnt the body of the supposed *vrikolakas*.¹ Moreover, the *nomokanones* were written to combat practices that the church deemed sinful and helped it to exert its authority over uncanonical practices by modifying or attempting to extirpate them. This intention, which lies behind the ecclesiastical approach to the *vrikolakas*, suggests that its description of the creature may not actually reflect the views of the laity. Rather than accepting the descriptions provided in the *nomokanones* as representative of popular belief and practice, these texts should be viewed as a meeting point between the beliefs of the church and those of the laity. The texts contain evidence of two understandings of the *vrikolakas*: that of the church and that revealed in the lay practice which it wishes to modify or outlaw. The attempt to change the beliefs of the laity becomes apparent when a number of *nomokanones* separated by time and space are studied. As already indicated 'vrikolakas' is only one name among many for this phenomenon and in each locality the creature is called something different and has particular characteristics. However, in the *nomokanones* the name of the creature and its behaviour remains the same. This implies that a standardised belief is being imposed through the *nomokanon*: the church is prescribing as well as proscribing.

Moreover, in the *nomokanon* the author has attempted to reformulate the popular conception of the *vrikolakas* in terms more acceptable to the church. The opposition of the church to the belief is apparent from the very beginning of the text. It begins: '*The dead man will not become a vrikolakas...*',² and the explanation that follows continues to display a reluctance to give credence to the belief. Instead, for the *nomokanon*, the *vrikolakas* is the work of the devil for he '*desiring to deceive someone or other carries out these evil wonders for the purpose of bringing about*

¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XII, p. 144.

² Ibid.

disharmony.³ The deception of the devil takes the form of an illusion of a *vrikolakas* which has no real existence. The text explains that often at night the devil places
*‘in the minds of some men [a belief] that a dead man comes up to those whom he recognised from before and conversed with them. And they see other ghosts in waking dreams. At another time they see him on the road, either walking, or standing still, and not only this alone, but also strangling men.’*⁴

The approach of the text indicates that the laity, unlike the church, believes that the creature is more than imagination, and has actual existence, but the church denies this once again: *‘Oh, the stupidity of pitiful men. Does he who is dead walk among and kill the living? This is impossible’*.⁵ The church perceives the devil working through his traditional methods of illusion and deception, in order to make the people believe in something that will anger God.

Later in the text, however, rather than working purely through illusion, the devil has actually taken possession of the body for the *nomokanon* states, *‘...since they are lacking in pure faith, the devil is transformed and puts on the corpse of the dead man as if a piece of clothing.’*⁶ This transformation is only possible because the poor faith of the laity gives the devil the power to transform himself. The *nomokanon* insists that it is the lack of faith in the true prescriptions of God - which do not allow the existence of *vrikolakes*- that enables the devil to make one appear. Although there is an acknowledgement here that something other than illusion has occurred, the emphasis continues to be on the ability of the devil to exert power over the imagination. The text continues: *‘that corpse, which has lain for such a time, dead in the tomb appears to **them** having flesh and blood and nails and hair.’* Again, the laity rushes to burn the body, after people have seen him in their *‘imagination’*.⁷ Finally the author of the *nomokanon* acknowledges that the corpse does have some existence outside the mind, although once again this is due to the work of the devil. This concession is essential, for it allows the church to apply some kind of remedy to the situation, and act to dissolve the body. The body is now treated as possessed and

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

the church proceeds with the rite appropriate to such cases - exorcism. The material existence is, however, a consequence of the way the laity is deceived by the illusions of the devil into believing in the *vrikolakas*. It is only through this deception that the devil can actually possess the body and make the *vrikolakas* into a reality. If the people refused to believe in the *vrikolakas*, the author seems to be saying, such things would not exist.

This *nomokanon* does give some credence to the belief in the *vrikolakas* but a second group of *nomokanones* rejects it altogether and explains away the appearance of an undissolved body in the tomb in terms of processes of natural decomposition. These texts argue that an undissolved body occurs when there is not enough air inside the tomb to draw up the moisture from the corpse. Soon after death the body begins to dissolve into its constituent parts which correspond to the four humours. Since the moisture from the liquefaction of the humours cannot escape because the tomb is sealed, it seeps into the dead body and causes it to swell up. This is what gives the *vrikolakas* its bloated appearance.⁸ This process is explained in terms foreign to our understanding of the processes of decay, but it is still a natural explanation of the appearance of the body, based on contemporary scientific understanding. The classical theory of the four humours remained extremely influential throughout the Byzantine period and its continuing authority is apparent in the description of the decomposition of the corpse. The body, like all matter is made up of the four humours: the author of the *nomokanon* lists them as blood, phlegm, bile and juices.⁹ Each of these is related to one of the four elements. Blood is related to fire, for it was believed that it was the source of the body's warmth; the juices were associated with air, bile with the earth and phlegm with water. When the soul leaves the body, the matter returns to its constituent elements. After death the body cools and, as the heat leaves the body, the blood too seeps out; as the humour associated with fire it cannot remain in the colder temperature of the corpse. However, the juices cannot escape to their natural element, air, because the tomb is sealed and instead they force

⁸ Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*, p. 69.

⁹ A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, „‘Οἱ βρικόλακες παρὰ Βυζαντινοῖς’, “ *Ομηρος* 5 (1877), 504-505.

themselves into the body cavities of the corpse. This causes the body to bloat and creates the distinctive appearance of the *vrikolakas*. Other characteristics of dead bodies are also explained in terms of natural, rather than supernatural forces; for example, the redness of the *vrikolakas* is attributed to the putrefaction of the body. The text provides no remedy for the *vrikolakas*: no action needs to be taken because nothing out of the ordinary exists.

Therefore, despite their different approaches, both these sources display hostility to a belief in the *vrikolakas*. Like the other *exotika* it presents evidence of an alternative source of spiritual power. However, it is difficult to discover how the laity conceived of the *vrikolakas*. Psellos suggests two ways in which *exotika* were supposed to arise, although he does not believe them himself. He says, for example, mocking those who believe in the *gello*, that it was neither a demon nor a man turned into a wild beast, implying the popular view held either or both of these positions.¹⁰ The laity of the seventeenth century combined these two categories and saw the *vrikolakas* as a man animated by demon. Thus in Mykonos, when they saw the *vrikolakas*, '*they concluded that the Deceas'd was a very ill man for not being thorowly dead, or in plain terms for suffering himself to be re-animated by Old Nick; which is the Notion they have of a Vroukolakas.*'¹¹ The *vrikolakas* is a man brought back to life by a demon. This is not the same as the church's reluctant acceptance of demonic possession of dead bodies. In this case the devil merely puts on the body like a set of clothes and there is nothing of the deceased person's personality remaining, beyond the illusions of the devil.

The church rejected a belief in the *vrikolakas* because its appearance implied that the soul remained trapped within the body, but, unlike the *tympaniaios*, the *vrikolakas* was not a consequence of excommunication. As stated above, the presence of blood and redness was characteristic of the *vrikolakas*. This implied that the soul was trapped within the body: once the soul left the body it began to decay and lost its blood. The church could not accept this interpretation, for it was only through God's

¹⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. III, p. 118.

¹¹ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 104.

power, exercised by his church in the form of excommunication, that the soul was permitted to remain in the body after death. The *vrikolakas* was not an excommunicate; therefore the soul could not be retained within the corpse and thus the *vrikolakas* could not really exist. If a body other than the *tympaniaios*, remained preserved, it meant that the devil had independent power on the earth, working outside the will of God. The presence of blood implied that he had the power to bring the bodies back to a form of life, an anti-life, as it mocked the real resurrection on the Last Day, and prevented the pitiful victim achieving his/her eternal life.

Given the tension between the two interpretations of the undissolved body it is significant that the literature opposing the *vrikolakas* dramatically increased at the same time as the explosion in accounts of the *tympaniaios*. If the church was claiming that the ability to preserve bodies belonged to it alone, it was unlikely to welcome an alternative belief which ascribed the same effect to another cause. One *nomokanon* makes this clear. It states categorically that the only body which might be found whole was that of an excommunicate, and even that body would dissolve once it had been forgiven.¹² For the church, the soul of the *vrikolakas*, unlike that of the *tympaniaios*, had to leave the body after death. Since the body was unable to act without the soul, it could not walk the roads in the way the laity described. They argued that the soul could not return to the body until the Day of Resurrection and therefore the body could not be re-animated by the devil. For the author of this *nomokanon*, the existence of the *vrikolakas* stems totally from the illusions of the devil. Only those excommunicated by the church are truly preserved after death.

If the church displays a reluctance to accept the existence of the *vrikolakas*, even when formulated in terms of an act of the devil, why did it not reject the belief altogether? Admittedly, as discussed above, some *nomokanones* do take this route, as in the example above where the *vrikolakas* was explained in terms of natural causes, but the vast majority follows the alternative approach. The aims of these two approaches must be considered to discover which aspects of the lay ritual they

¹² Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Οἱ βρικόλακες', 504.

focused on. In the first extract, where the church was less rigorous in its rejection of the *vrikolakas*, the burning of the corpse was considered to be the most heinous part of the belief and the penance was specifically related to this act:

*'They burn that corpse and destroy it completely. The fools do not see that their punishment in that eternal and inextinguishable fire is already prepared for them in the terrible second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that they will burn for all eternity. They burn that corpse and destroy it in the present time, but in future time, namely on the day of judgement, they will give account of all such things before the terrible judge and they will hear from him their condemnation to go into the fire and be punished for all eternity. If, therefore, they repent with all their heart for this great wickedness which they have carried out, if they are lay people they should remain without communion for six years; if they are priests, they should be entirely deprived of their priesthood.'*¹³

The *nomokanon* threatens terrible torment for those who cremated the body unless they showed great repentance. This was because destroying the body in this way ended all hope of salvation, making bodily resurrection impossible, and there was also a danger of destroying the soul along with the demon.¹⁴ Therefore in this example the prime concern of the church was to prevent the laity burning the body.

In contrast, the text which advocated the 'natural' explanation of the *vrikolakas* aimed to wipe out the belief in the *vrikolakas* altogether. However, although it countered the belief with an alternative explanation of the phenomenon, it was one which entailed a complete denial of the experience of the laity. This *nomokanon* could not explain why certain bodies became *vrikolakes*, and not others. Nor did it take into account the other phenomena associated with the body, such as the attacks on property and individuals. For the laity the *vrikolakas* is not just an explanation of an undissolved body: it must be emphasised that they saw *vrikolakes* walking in the roads, causing disruption before the undissolved body was discovered. The discovery of the body validates their experience, but is not the sum total of it. The former explanation, although - or rather because - it does not oppose the belief

¹³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XII, p. 145.

¹⁴ Juliet Du Boulay, 'The Greek Vampire: A Study of Cyclic Symbolism in Marriage and Death', *Man* 17 (1982), 222.

completely, acknowledges the experience of the laity, but reinterprets it, not as the work of the *vrikolakas*, but as an illusion of the devil.

This interpretation was part of a process of moulding the popular beliefs and making them compatible with the world view of the church. The phenomenon was interpreted in such a way that the source of evil was not the body itself but the devil, the traditional and recognised evil figure in the Christian religion. Thus the *vrikolakas* was fitted into the general scheme of a battle between good and evil and could be dealt with as a possessed body using traditional methods of exorcism. In this way the church stressed that as Christ's appointed governor on earth it was the proper authority to deal with such demonic threats. The cause of possession was also understood in Christian terms. The devil derived his power from the sinful lack of belief of the community. He did not possess a body at random but according to the established principles of analogy discussed above, although here it is the community rather than the individual who attracts the devil through sinful behaviour. This brings the *vrikolakas* within the bounds of the Orthodox church. Moreover, by emphasizing the proper role of the church in dealing with the *vrikolakas* the *nomokanon* provides an alternative way of disposing of the undissolved body. It no longer had to be burnt but could be exorcised by the church.

This approach was also more meaningful to members of the clergy. In spite of the church's ambivalent position with respect to the *vrikolakas*, in addition to the laity, clergymen and monks also tell stories of their experiences with this kind of undissolved body. The Abbot of Amorgos is one of Father Richard's informants on the phenomenon.¹⁵ With such a wide constituent of belief, including those who were charged with correcting the errors of the laity, a complete denial of their experience would have been unsuccessful in extirpating the practice of burning the body, so abhorred by the church.

¹⁵ Richard, *Relation*, pp. 212-3.

Evidence from Richard shows the population following the church prescriptions, suggesting that the *nomokanon* had some effect on the habits of the laity. He tells of the body of the daughter of an Orthodox priest, who was found undissolved.

*'It happened here some years ago to the body of Caliste, the daughter of a Greek priest. [Her body] being found intact, she was exorcised by a Greek priest who passed for orthodox and in the presence of everyone [the body] began to lose its weight and become so odorous that no one was able to stay in the church. Thus it was buried immediately and she no longer appeared as before.'*¹⁶

In this instance the exorcism was completely successful. As the priest pronounced the words the body dissolved and exhibited the usual signs of decay. The final proof of its efficacy was that the *vrikolakas* was never seen again. It was not only priests' families who were law abiding and sought out clergymen to solve their problems with the *vrikolakas*. In Tournefort's account too, the local population called in the priests to deal with the issue.¹⁷ Again, Richard recounts a story of a tradesman from Patmos who had died away from home.¹⁸ The sailors who transported him realised that he had become a *vrikolakas* but did not mention this to anyone. However:

*'in a little while the dead man revealed what he was for he began to cause so much terror, entering houses by night, shouting, howling and hitting, so that [there were] more than fifteen people [who] died in a few days either from fright or from blows. The priests and the monks of the place did everything in their power to stop the course of such a fatal tragedy, but in vain.'*¹⁹

Thus the exorcism of the church was accepted by the laity as an effective and appropriate method of removing a *vrikolakas*. Often the body was placed in a different tomb and the burial rites performed again, in addition to the exorcism. In the three examples cited above the church is the first port of call for the laity when facing the threat of the *vrikolakas*. This is representative of the examples from this period. In all but one account the local villagers turned to the church before taking any action towards the body themselves. The church was now seen as the correct authority to deal with such creatures, and acknowledged to have special powers in

¹⁶ Richard, *Relation*, pp. 210-211.

¹⁷ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 103.

¹⁸ Richard, *Relation*, pp. 213-215.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 215.

this direction. The *nomokanon* can therefore be seen as having affected the behaviour of the laity and brought the practice within the fold of the church.

Unfortunately, the exorcism of the church did not always achieve the desired effect. In the case of the merchant from Patmos, and also in Tournefort's example, the exorcisms and rites of the church were carried out 'in vain'.²⁰ The body remained entire and whole and continued to harass the local population. The community then turned to other more desperate and extreme measures. When the exorcisms failed in the case of the merchant the priests decided that the exorcism had to be carried out at the place of death in order to be effective. Therefore they instructed the sailors to take the body back:

*'This did not happen because the sailors unloaded it at the first deserted island and instead of a tomb they set up a funeral pyre for it. After it had been reduced to cinders the apprehension and troubles ceased and the demon appeared to have lost its strength since the dead man appeared no more.'*²¹

Once again, the proof of the method lay in whether or not the creature reappeared. In this case cremation succeeded where exorcism had failed. Exorcism therefore was only one among a number of remedies for the *vrikolakas*, and not necessarily the most powerful.²²

If one method did not succeed, another was applied, and reasons were found to explain away the failure of the original attempt, although we are not always told what they were. The remedies were not applied unthinkingly, but were worked out using current ideas about cause and effect. If one approach did not work this often meant that it had been negated by a certain event during the ritual. Alternatively, the priest's failure to dissolve the body by exorcism could be explained by the stubbornness or power of the demon. In other cases the ritual was deemed to have

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Bodies were also destroyed by casting them into water (cf. W.M. Leake, *Travels in Northern Greece*, London: J. Dodwell, 1835, vol 2, p. 216), and priests as well as laity used the method of chopping the body into small parts before reburial. This appears to have been an acceptable method for disposal.

been performed incorrectly and thus enabled the demon to escape. Following the failure to dissolve the body through liturgical rites the people of Mykonos decided to tear of the heart of the creature:

*'On the next day, ...a solemn mass was sung in the chapel where the body lay in order to expel the demon, who, as they believed, had taken possession of it. The body was exhumed after the mass, and presently everything was ready to tear out the heart according to custom.'*²³

The heart in Byzantine mystical thought was the location of passion, feeling and also remembrance of God. This made it the target for the devil, who wanted to displace God in the heart of man. A report from Richard also testifies to the importance of the heart as the seat of the devil. When he attended an investigation of a corpse which had been accused of being a *vrikolakas* he could see nothing out of the ordinary in its state of decay. The superior did not deny this, but a priest standing by replied, *'it was enough that his heart was entire to enable it to be the seat of a demon.'*²⁴ Removal of the heart would also remove the demon, and burning the heart, with the demon trapped inside, would destroy the demon too. The villagers expected this to be the end of the disturbances, as usually, *'with the smoke from the fire the demon loses his strength.'*²⁵ In this case, however, although *'they were of the opinion it would be their best course to burn the dead Man's Heart on the Sea-shore ... this execution did not make him a bit more tractable; he went on with his racket more furiously than ever.'*²⁶

What had gone wrong? Immolation of the heart should have put an end to the *vrikolakas*. The villagers believed that a mistake had been made in the ceremony. Mass should have been celebrated after they had extracted the heart rather than before. This way the demon would have been unable to re-enter the corpse as it would have been sanctified through the mass and so protected from the devil. As it was, when the liturgy was over, he was able to re-enter at his leisure. This was why the heart, where the devil was lodged, had to be physically removed. Finally, when

²³ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 104.

²⁴ Richard, *Relation*, p. 222.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 212.

²⁶ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 104.

they could think of no other solution, they resolved to burn the whole body to expel the demon:

*'They knew not now what Saint to call upon, when of a sudden with one Voice, as if they had given each other the hint, they fell to bawling out all through the City, that it was intolerable to wait any longer; that the only way left, was to burn the Vroucolacas intire (sic); that after so doing, let the Devil lurk in it if he could; that 'twas better to have recourse to this Extremity, than to have the Island totally deserted.'*²⁷

Therefore the population continued to resort to cremation as a solution to the problem of the *vrikolakas*. Although the laity did adopt the approach prescribed by the church, when it failed they turned to other methods: exorcism was only one approach in their repertoire. Moreover, burning the body was more successful than the rites carried out by the church, for after burning had taken place the *vrikolakas* no longer appeared. However, this was acknowledged to be an extreme measure and in almost all cases the matter was referred to the priest in the first instance. Perhaps the laity too acknowledged the grave effects this action would have on the afflicted soul.

Nevertheless, as far as the people were concerned, the burning of the body and the clerical rites did not belong to two different systems as they did for the church. The laity do not lose faith in the power of the church even though the ecclesiastical rites alone had failed to dispose of the body. The quotation above shows that even after the failure of the exorcism the church continued to remain an important part of the process. Masses and prayers preceded the cutting out of the heart. When this too failed the laity still did not lose faith in the ecclesiastical authorities:

*'They meet night and morning, they debate, they make Processions three days and three nights; they oblige the Papas to fast; you might see them running from House to House, Holy-Water-Brush in hand, sprinkling it all about, and washing the doors with it; nay, they pour'd it into the mouth of the poor Vroukolakas...[but] the Vroukolakas was incorrigible, and all the Inhabitants were in a strange Consternation.'*²⁸

To the laity, their methods and the methods of the church formed a unified system. It was the church which drew a dividing line and *'not one Papas would be at St*

²⁷ Ibid, p. 106.

²⁸ Ibid, pp. 105-6.

George when the Body was burnt.²⁹ However, as indicated by the proscription in the *nomokanones*, it was not only the laity who involved themselves in this action. When priests were presiding, the ceremony took place with prayers and incense, illustrating once again the integration of these rituals into popular belief. Conversely, the church also absorbed elements from the laity. Although the church did not approve of burning, it did appear to recognise the efficacy of complete destruction of the body. One unfortunate man was exorcised all day and was then hacked to pieces with an axe by the priests and buried in a new grave.³⁰

Despite the belief in possession by a devil, it is clear that for the laity the corpse retains aspects of its personality and family relationships remain meaningful. One of the strangest accounts Richard gives is of the cobbler, Alexander, who returned to his widow after his death.

*'After his death he appeared to his wife as if he were still alive: he came and worked in her house, mended his children's shoes, he went to draw water from the cistern and was often to be seen in the vales cutting wood to support his family.'*³¹

His relationship with his family seems to have continued in death as it did in life, with no terrifying effects. The relationships of Iannetis Anapilotis were not so happy. After his death he began to rush up and down the streets, harassing *'particularly the houses of all the family and relations; but he bore much more of a grudge against his wife.'*³² In Alexander's case it was the community who took exception to him, and moved directly to the burning of the body. The community was reluctant to take action against Iannetis, however; *'being held in esteem, they did not dare publish his name.'*³³ He had been one of the wealthiest and most notorious usurers of the island, and his status seems to have continued after death. The relationship of both men with their family and community remained important, emphasising the continuing ties between the living and the dead.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 107.

³⁰ Richard, *Relation*, pp. 220-221.

³¹ Ibid, p. 212.

³² Ibid, p. 219.

³³ Ibid, p. 219.

The continuing relationship between the living and the dead is also illustrated by the Orthodox worship. This was expressed both through intercessionary prayers for the dead, and through the masses said on the anniversary of the death of the individual. The ties with the dead were not only expressed through these ecclesiastical practices but also through the obligations of the family to the deceased. The family had to clean and purify the body, to prepare it for burial. The house too had to be cleansed from the pollution brought by death. A vigil was held over the body until the funeral service when mass was said over it. However, obligations to the dead do not end with the burial of the body. On the third, ninth and fortieth day after burial and every year for five years on the anniversary of the death a service was held for the body. Georgirenes, the Archbishop of Samos, reported that this also occurred at the end of three months, six months, nine months, and annually thereafter.³⁴ It is interesting that the ceremonies immediately following the death and the idea about the departure of the soul on the fortieth day, are mirrored by the process of decay of the body. On the third day the face dissolves, on the ninth the break down of the body begins and only the heart remains, and on the fortieth the process of decay is completed as the heart dissolves as well. It is this final dissolution of the heart, as we have seen above, that is vital for the salvation of the body. The family and friends, through their participation in the commemoration, play a role in the journey that the soul and body are undergoing. This has its corollary in the family celebrations. As well as these set days for remembrance, the women of the family tended to the grave regularly, lighting candles and often leaving food or drink.

Indeed, it could be argued that this participation was essential to the progress of the soul. Normally, the liturgical, psychical and physical separation followed the same pattern. With the *vrikolakas*, however, something has gone wrong. Although the Orthodox emphasised the community of the living and the dead, it acknowledged that a separation has occurred. The person left his family and community, the soul left the body, the body lost its form and decayed. With the *vrikolakas* this separation between life and death has not been completed. The dead person has returned and

³⁴ Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 49.

exists as an anomaly in the world of the living. The proper processes have been reversed in the false resurrection. The body returns but although it is clearly the individual in some senses, the relationship has changed, except in the exceptional case where the cobbler continues to live with his wife and family as before.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence in the sources to explain why this phenomenon occurs. Importantly, Barber has noted that the phenomenon identified as a *vrikolakas* is a natural stage through which all bodies progress.³⁵ Only some of these, however, are suspected of being *vrikolakas* and unearthed. Why were certain deaths suspicious and deemed to be open to diabolic possession and others not? Often we are told nothing about the cause of the *vrikolakas*. It is clear, at least, that the people do not follow the church prescription that the *vrikolakas* is merely an illusion of the devil made real by their belief. The extracts from Tournefort in particular have shown how frighteningly real the *vrikolakas* could be. His *vrikolakas* is a man who has been murdered in a field and has lain there for several days undiscovered.³⁶ The *nomokanon* too tells us that sudden and violent death lead to the creation of a *vrikolakas*.³⁷ Sudden death through a virulent illness, such as the plague or black death can also cause a revenant to form.³⁸ These categories of the deceased are also listed in the canon for the dead with a special intercessory prayer requesting peace for them after death, suggesting that they in particular were restless.³⁹ In the account of the merchant of Patmos the body had to be transported a distance after he died, and even before he arrived the process of transformation had occurred. Finally with Iannetis Anapliotis there are two explanations for his reappearance. Father Richard believes that he is not a *vrikolakas* at all. He has returned because his wife has not fulfilled her promise to provide restitution to all he wronged during his life time, but instead has used her own judgement to distribute the money in alms. Restitution has not been made and so he cannot rest in peace. He has returned to remind her of her

³⁵ Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial, and Death: Folklore and Reality*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, p. 103 ff.

³⁶ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 103.

³⁷ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Οι βρικόλακες', 504.

³⁸ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XII, p. 142.

³⁹ Eastern Orthodox Church, 'Canon', 105-6.

obligation. This interpretation obviously has a Catholic slant to it. The Orthodox priests, however, are insistent that he is a *vrikolakas*.

In all the above cases, the family has been unable to carry out the required burial rites which were due to the deceased immediately after death has occurred.⁴⁰ The murdered man lay in the field for several days before being buried. The merchant had to be transported home before the rites could be carried out. For those who die during the plague, with the volume of deaths occurring, it is unlikely that individuals would have received the care and attention due to them. This would imply that soldiers killed on the battlefield would be prime candidates for possession, but the laity of Crete tell Pashley that those killed in war never become *vrikolakes*.⁴¹ One *nomokanon*, while arguing for a natural cause for the phenomenon, admits that if the devil ever possessed dead bodies he would choose those of soldiers on the battle field.⁴² The author feels the fact that these bodies always decay proves his point that putrefaction requires air, and for this reason and no other, bodies are found undissolved when they have been sealed up without air in tombs. He argues against a supernatural production of the *vrikolakas* by showing that the paradigm of the soldier does not follow the pattern it should. He focuses on the soldier because these bodies are neither guarded, nor partake in the holy services. These then are the rituals that protect the body from the devil. The soldiers do not receive this attention from their families, and so might be expected to become *vrikolakes*. They do not and therefore this cause of the *vrikolakas*, he believes, must be false. In this he has revealed the emphasis placed on the fulfilment of obligations to the dead by the church and the family.

Iannettis' wife also fails to carry out her duties, but these are of a different sort. Not only was she charged with the usual task of carrying out the burial rituals, but she also had to provide restitution to those he had wronged. He returned when she failed in her obligation. It was essential that all the obligations were fulfilled for the ties

⁴⁰ Barber, *Vampires*, pp. 124-5.

⁴¹ Robert Pashley, *Travels in Crete*, 2 vols., Athens: Dion. N. Karavias, vol. 2, p. 222.

⁴² Mouzakis, *Οι βρικόλακες*, p. 69.

between the world and the dead, the family and the individual to be dissolved. When they remain unfulfilled the body remained tied to the world. Father Richard has a great deal of sympathy for Iannetis, and states, '*Happy is he who does not place on others the responsibility for his salvation.*'⁴³ However, in the popular Orthodox view of the progression of the soul, the individual must rely on the community. The relationship between the individual and the community is absolutely essential for progress into the other world. This has already been discussed with respect to the help provided by the spiritual father and can be seen in the masses and intercessionary prayers for the dead. Just as in the case of the *tympaniaios* the individual is tied to the world through his own sins, so in the case of the *vrikolakas* he is tied to the world by the obligation of others to him. He cannot escape either if his own obligations or those of others due to him remain unfulfilled. The *vrikolakas* and the *tympaniaios* therefore are centred on different relationships that exist in society. This analysis suggests that they are different in many ways, but also that in some ways they are two parts of the same whole. One regulates the relationship between the individual and society, for as has been discussed above, excommunication is increasingly related to preservation of social order, and the other with the relationship between society and the individual. The final section will discuss underlying similarities between the two before returning to an analysis of Allatios' interpretation.

⁴³ Richard, *Relation*, p. 218.

Underlying Factors Common to the *Tympaniaios* and the *Vrikolakas*

The aim here has not been to establish the origin of the two revenant types. Many writers have ascribed them to Slavic influence but Greenfield in his extensive study of Byzantine demonology states that he has found no trace of the *vrikolakas* or *tympaniaios* in his period. Others see their origins in the blood drinking ghosts of ancient Greece. The question of origins is therefore a difficult one and these starting points shed no light on the role that they played in the society of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Greece, nor on the relationship that existed between them. At first sight the two types of revenant appear to be completely different. One is a creation of the church and mediates the individual's relationship with God. His salvation depends on his individual conduct. If it contravenes the laws of the church he is excommunicated. With the *vrikolakas* it is the relationship with the community and, above all, the family, upon which the afterlife depends. It is they that discover the *vrikolakas*, deal with it, in ways approved of or proscribed by the church, and it is out of this relationship that the *vrikolakas* arises. While the *tympaniaios* is dependent on an idea of sin, and blame attaching to the individual, with the *vrikolakas* the blame does not lie with the individual at all. The church has less of a hold over the *vrikolakas* than the *tympaniaios*, which it both creates and frees.

Although the absolute origins of the revenant in Greece would shed little light on the current concerns, it is useful to consider briefly the example of Judas Iscariot. Judas committed suicide but was cut down before he suffocated. His flesh swelled up because of his impiety to such an extent that he was unable to pass along roads that carts drove through. Mouzakis refers to Judas as the first *vrikolakas*, and he does indeed display some of the characteristics of the *vrikolakas*: the swollen body, with seeping suppurations terrifying those on the road. The transformations also took place after his attempted suicide. Folklorists and anthropologists have identified this as another action that results in a revenant. He did not suffer the fate of the *vrikolakas* and this term is never applied to him. Is he closer to the *tympaniaios*? To the Byzantines he represented the typical death of a sinner and like the church-created revenant he was explicitly associated with individual wrong doing. This similarity

does not indicate his identity as he also does not correspond exactly to the outline of a *tympaniaios*. There is no mention of excommunication, nor is the body dissolved by a clergyman, and of course, he wanders in the roads in a way that a *tympaniaios* does not. He cannot be seen as the exact prototype of either the *vrikolakas* or the *tympaniaios*.¹

It is significant that located within this phenomenon are characteristics of both the *vrikolakas* and the *tympaniaios*. It highlights an area of overlap between the two - impiety. The excommunicated, transgressing the laws of God, are deemed to be impious. As late as the nineteenth century, the Greek abbot of Roussikon on Mount Athos, who let the monastery fall into the hands of the hated Russians, is said never to have dissolved.² Equally, the non-Orthodox Latins and Muslims, were also seen in this way, specifically those who had converted from Orthodoxy. The bodies of the monks of the Lavra who joined in with the Latin mass, remained undissolved after death, because of their wickedness.³ Here they fail to dissolve because of individual impiety. In the case of the *vrikolakas* the devil has created it to try to bring about impiety. The body is possessed by the devil and the devil traditionally challenges those who are pure in faith. Orthodox communities are terrorised by the *vrikolakas*, because of the threat they pose to the devil. This is even suggested by the *nomokanones*, who describe the devil as delighting in angering God by tempting the pious.

The *vrikolakas* is also interpreted in this way by the abbot of the monastery of Amorgos. He informs Father Richard that *vrikolakes* show that the Orthodox, not the Catholics, practise the true faith. Despite, or rather because of, this link to the devil, the *vrikolakas* reveals the piety of the Orthodox community. Just as the *tympaniaios* allows the binding and loosing power of the clergy to be revealed, and hence their authority from God, so the *vrikolakas* reveals the closeness of the Orthodox faithful to God. Although the revenant in both cases is linked to different forms of impiety,

¹ On this phenomenon see H. Martin, "The Judas Iscariot Curse", *American Journal of Philology* 434-451.

² R. M. Dawkins, *The Monks of Mount Athos*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1936, p. 305.

³ Ibid.

both revenants are also used by the Orthodox to prove their faith against Catholic pressure.

This suggests that the two types of revenant may not be as far apart as they appear. It was possible for confusion to exist in the classification of a revenant. Rycaut describes the behaviour of an excommunicated man, who fled to the island of Milos:

'The Paisants and Islanders were every night affrighted and disturbed with strange and unusual apparitions, which they immediately concluded arose from the Grave of the accursed Excommunicant, which, according to their Custom, they immediately opened, and therein found the Body uncorrupted, ruddy, and the Veins replete with Blood'.⁴

The priests decided to cut it into tiny pieces and boil it in wine to destroy it. The friends of the deceased, however, desired the soul to rest in peace, and obtained a reprieve to purchase an absolution from the patriarch, which achieved its aim.⁵ It is interesting here that the islanders, who did not know that the man had fled from Morea under excommunication, assumed that he had become a *vrikolakas*. He fulfilled the requirements of this. The description given of his burial rites implies that he did not receive what was due to him. His body carelessly and without solemnity was interred in some remote and unfrequented place. Far from home, his family would have been unable to carry out the required rituals. His body therefore came under suspicion of being a *vrikolakas*. The priests too intended to carry out acts designed specifically to remove a *vrikolakas* rather than a *tympaniaios*. Although there are many ways of destroying *vrikolakes*, only absolution will lift an excommunication and allow the natural process of decay to continue. His family and friends at home, aware that he was under an excommunication, followed this very course of action, which fortunately proved successful, confirming their interpretation of events. This account therefore is not an example of an amalgamation of the two types; it is more that the descriptions of the behaviour come from different groups of people.

This example illustrates how important knowledge of the events preceding and immediately following death were for identifying the corpse as a *vrikolakas* or a *tympaniaios*. This implies that it was not always easy to discern which category the

⁴ Rycaut, *Churches*, pp.279-280.

⁵ Rycaut, *Churches*, pp. 281-2.

undissolved body fell into. This presented a problem for the church. The laity claimed the ability to deal with certain undissolved bodies, but it was not always clear which type of body the corpse was. The sixteenth-century church took great pains to make a distinction between the two bodies. With the changing jurisdiction of the church, and the changing of the ideas concerning sin and penance, as well as the need of the church to display its power in a visible way, it became necessary for them to clarify the distinction between the two types. One type of revenant was defined as belonging exclusively to their sphere of action. One *nomokanon* states categorically that no other body is found whole in a tomb except that of an excommunicate.⁶ If a body was found undissolved it must fall under the jurisdiction of the church, because only excommunicated bodies truly behaved in this way.

The increasing presence of the *tympaniaios* meant that the issue of the *vrikolakas* became a much greater concern of the church, not only because of the need to distinguish it from the *tympaniaios*, but also to bring the revenant as a whole under its sphere of influence. Paradoxically, this meant that the distance between the two was reduced. In the above section we have already investigated how the official church tried to incorporate an idea outside its remit into its sphere of action. In many ways, in the interpretation provided by the *nomokanones* the *vrikolakas* takes on features similar to the *tympaniaios*. In both cases, for the body to remain undissolved there must have been some transgression of the church laws. The devil works through those who disobey the church precepts. In the latter case, the connection between possession and the devil is not as direct as in that of the *tympaniaios*. Although the judgement appears to land randomly on the individual, the church holds that the fault lies with the community. The church has recognised the role played by the community in the creation of the *vrikolakas* but has translated it into terms acceptable to its dogma. The church understands the *vrikolakas* in terms close to that of the *tympaniaios*.

Similarly, there is evidence that the people did not understand the excommunication rite in the same terms as the church. Robbers attacked a bishop while he was journeying through the countryside. When they realised who he was they murdered

⁶ Papadopoulos-Kerameus, 'Οι βρικόλακες', 505.

him because they *'called to mind that the bishop would in all probability excommunicate them, as soon as he reached a place of safety. They saw no means of averting this dreadful calamity, except by the death of the unfortunate prelate whom they pursued, overtook and shot.'*⁷ Surely murder was a graver crime and sin than robbery? Why did they compound theft with homicide? The robbers considered excommunication from the bishop they had wronged to be more powerful than a general excommunication given out by the church against unknown culprits. They believed that the excommunication was effective because they were known to the bishop. Although the church stated that the efficacy of the excommunication relied on the omniscience of God, for the robbers it required the personal contact between the victim and the perpetrator. The excommunication gained power through the relationship established between the two parties.

Aside from the creation of the *vrikolakas*, excommunication had many other harmful side effects. It was believed that *'if a Papas excommunicates or even utters an imprecation against anyone the man falls ill, and can only be restored to health by going to the very Papas who has caused his suffering, or to a bishop to obtain the removal of the ban.'*⁸ Members of the laity would pay the priest to excommunicate their neighbours. It is not the payment for the rite that was unusual, as all clerical duties attracted a charge, but the request from the laity and the attempt to use the excommunication in their daily squabbles. Excommunication, like a curse, could cause sickness and harm to their enemies. It brought down the anger of God upon the individual, and this manifested itself in physical and well as spiritual harm.

Once again personal contact was important. We have seen above that Balsamon lays down this prescription to prevent absolution being obtained too easily, but here the instruction should be seen in terms of the bond established between two individuals. The only Papas who could lift the sentence was the one who had pronounced it. Someone of higher rank was also able to loose the afflicted one. Some believed that the rank of the cleric and the type of sentence passed was even revealed in the appearance of the undissolved body. The anathematised look yellow and have

⁷ Pashley, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 223.

⁸ Ibid, p. 227.

wrinkled fingers, those excommunicated by divine laws look livid and ghastly white, and those that appear black have been excommunicated by a bishop.⁹ A bishop is more powerful than a priest, and so the excommunication of a bishop was stronger than that of the priest. The absolution had to be carried out by the individual who had placed it, or by one possessed of greater authority, who had the ability to remove another's ban.

Strangely, here there is no suggestion that the excommunication had to be justified in order to cause the effects. This explains the need for the excommunication rite to state that the promulgation had to be '*legitimate and lawful*' for it to have any effect. This did not change the belief that the power lay in the words of the excommunication itself when pronounced by a member of the clergy. In this and the other aspects discussed above, the laity understood the excommunication rite in terms similar to a curse. The type of curse most commonly encountered was issued against a couple about to be married. A knot was tied, binding pieces of hair or clothes from the individuals in question and the curse pronounced over it. Unless the curser and his knots were found, the spell could not be lifted, and the bridegroom was rendered impotent. Here, as above, the power lay in the words pronounced and in the relationship which existed between the curser and the cursed, which was sealed in the knot over which the curse was spoken. In fact the excommunication rite in its structure was very similar to a curse. The same terminology of binding and loosing was common to both curse and excommunication. They were also commonly used in the same way. Curses were used to seal contracts, in the same way as an excommunication was used once the jurisdiction of the church widened. The curse of the 318 Fathers of Nicaea was particularly important. During the Byzantine period, the curse of the 318 Fathers of Nicaea was used to protect property and contracts. The excommunication rite also called on the powers of the said fathers, '*may they have the curses of the holy and righteous Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of the 318 Saints who were the divine fathers of the Synod of Nicaea, and of all the other holy synods*'. The above extract is in fact a curse, which formed an integral part of the

⁹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XIV, p. 151. Allatios states that this comes from a ms at Hagia Sophia. Richard also claims to have seen the manuscript and quotes from it, *Relation*, pp. 225-226.

excommunication rite. A curse, like excommunication was believed to bring down the anger of God on the specified individual and consign him/her to the devil.

Moreover, the rite of absolution used for dissolving the *tympaniaios*, is very similar to the rite of exorcism used to destroy the *vrikolakas*. When a body possessed by the devil has been discovered, instead of burning it, the *nomokanones* advise that a priest should be found. He should then perform the intercession of the Virgin Mary and the little blessing. The liturgy should then be said followed by an appeal to the Virgin Mary in aid of all and a memorial service carried out with *kolyva*, as in the funeral service. The two exorcisms of baptism should follow this, and the rest of the prayers required by the test of St Basil the Great. Finally the holy water should be sprinkled on the people there, and on the remains, and this should force the demon to leave the body.¹⁰ In the rite of absolution, the prayers of St Basil are said over the body, and the intercession of the Virgin Mary and the saints invoked on behalf of the excommunicate and the community and the funeral liturgy carried out, with *kolyva* again, and reburial of the now decomposing remains takes place. In both places the presence of *kolyva* is important as it is symbolic of the decay of the body, and its return back into the earth.

Cursing was recognised as one way in which a *tympaniaios* might arise. In the examples cited above, which deal with the different types of pronouncement which caused a body to remain undissolved, the curse of a parent is mentioned. If anyone is bound by this 'oath or curse, he will have the front parts of his body intact'.¹¹ Similarly a prayer for the loosing of an undissolved body requests forgiveness for the body even if it had been bound through excommunication, through the curse of a father or mother, if the individual had cursed himself in some way, or had broken his oath.¹² Cursing is seen to have the same effects as excommunication, and is classed alongside it.¹³

¹⁰ Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*, pp. 74-5.

¹¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XIV, p. 151.

¹² Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*, pp. 85-86.

¹³ On cursing see Helen Saradi, 'Cursing in the Byzantine Notarial Acts: A Form of Warranty', *Byzantina* 17 (1994), 441-533; P. Gounarides., 'Ὁρκος καὶ ἀφορισμὸς στὰ Βυζαντινὰ δικαστήρια', *Σύμμεικτα* 7 (1987), 41-57.

This suggests that in many ways excommunication itself was seen as analogous to an ecclesiastical curse. It mattered little whether it was justified or not. In some cases the laity are described by travellers as carrying out their own anathemas. A villager gathered together all his friends and pronounced an excommunication against his neighbour. He then built a cairn by the side of the road, so that with every stone added the pronouncement would increase in strength. This is far from the church understanding of excommunication, but illustrates how ecclesiastical promulgations have been assimilated into the corpus of lay curses.¹⁴ As we have seen, after death, the excommunicate became a *tympaniaios*. Folklorists list it as one of the ways in which *vrikolakes* arise. Those who have been cursed become a *vrikolakas*.

Although outwardly dissimilar, there are underlying factors common to both the *tympaniaios* and the *vrikolakas*. From a popular point of view, the two traditions are compatible. Their beliefs concerning the *vrikolakas* were very broad, and could incorporate the ideas of the church into their own canon. This also explains why the *nomokanones* discussing the *vrikolakas* started to appear in such great numbers at the very time that the *tympaniaios* tradition was emphasised by the church. The church was concerned that these bodies should not be confused with those caused by the church, and, at the same time, wanted to discredit any other power which claimed to be able to produce them.

Does this similarity go any way towards explaining why Allatios confused the two? Was it the case that on Chios, the two traditions were seen as one? The only evidence once more is from a western traveller. Thevenot, who visited Chios in the seventeenth century. He reports that the monks of Nea Moni state that, '*if any of the dead bodies do not corrupt, the rest of the Calloyers say, it is a sign that they are excommunicated.*'¹⁵ A little later he mentions an undecayed dead body again, but this time, '*the Inhabitants of this place firmly believe, that if a dead Body does not in forty days time corrupt, it turns to a Hobgoblin, which they call Zorzolacas, or*

¹⁴ Laurent, *Recollections*, vol. 1, p. 87.

¹⁵ Thevenot, *Travels*, p. 96.

Nomolacas.¹⁶ He proceeds to relate an example of this from a manuscript that he has seen. This tells of a priest who was seen reading over a dead body, uncorrupted after fifty days in the tomb. The priest told of the disruption caused by the body, which roamed about at night, knocking on doors calling out names. Those that replied died. This of course is behaviour characteristic of a *vrikolakas*, and it is likely that *nomolacas* was the word for *vrikolakas* in the Chiote dialect. It is difficult to know how strict a line was drawn between these two types. Were the excommunicated bodies called *nomolakes* too? It is significant, however, that it is the ecclesiastics who identify the uncorrupted body as an excommunicate, whereas the laity refer to it as a *nomolakas*, and it is the *nomolakas*, not the excommunicated body, that displays the characteristic behaviour of the second type of revenant. Here, as in all the other cases of the *vrikolakas*, there is no mention that the body has been excommunicated. Originally related by a priest, the story of the *nomolakas* would not have omitted to mention this vital piece of information had it been an excommunication that had created the revenant.

It seems likely that Allatios' conflation of the two revenants was not due to his Chiote background. On the contrary, his relation of his own experience suggests that by the time he came to include it in his text he had distanced himself from the Orthodox tradition, if he had ever been immersed in it, and could no longer understand the event in those terms. Moreover, he was less concerned with understanding the tradition in its own context than describing the undecayed bodies of the Greeks in terms of Purgatory. This must be seen in the context of his other writings concerning the relationship between the Catholic and Orthodox churches. There, despite his undeserved reputation for hostility towards the Orthodox church he endeavours to minimise the differences between the two churches. This is exactly what he is doing with his account of the undissolved corpse. For this, all that is important is that the body is seen to suffer after death. No further distinction need be made. He does not seem to be interested in the accounts themselves, only in so far as they prove his point. His texts are selected to draw the analogy between the undecayed corpse of the Greeks, and the third place of the Catholics. His interpretation of the *tympaniaios* and the *vrikolakas* therefore cannot be taken at face value.

¹⁶ Thevenot, *Travels*, p. 98.

Allatios and Popular Healing

A text on popular religion might seem a strange offering from Allatios to Zacchias, the papal physician, but, in spite of the subject matter, it is perhaps not surprising that a text written by a doctor to a doctor displays some interest in the problems of disease causation and cure. A common theme connects all the *exotika* discussed by Allatios: they are all associated in the popular mind with particular physical conditions. The *gello* is seen as the cause of sickness of new-born children and their mothers.¹ The *vrikolakas* brings plague to the community.² The *nerieides* strike down particularly beautiful young men who wander off the path into their spheres of influence, causing them to have a stroke or seizure and subsequent deformity.³ On the other hand, a disease might actually cause the afflicted to see the demon. In the case of the *babutzikarios*, poor eyesight caused the suffering individual to see things which were not there. One man believed he was pursued by this demon, unaware of the physical condition which caused him to have hallucinations.⁴ Again, physical symptoms are here experienced in terms of demonic attack. The theme of healing too runs through the work. Allatios discusses exorcism, amulets, baptism, but pride of place in his discussion goes to unction. This chapter aims to consider Allatios' presentation of disease and healing, following his own emphasis on the topic of unction. It is important to investigate how Allatios' descriptions fit into the wider context of disease and healing within the Orthodox tradition before considering his own understanding and appraisal of these practices.

The association of demons with disease is evident in exorcism texts contemporary with Allatios. These contain prayers to cast out the demons which were identified with a whole range of sicknesses, from headaches through kidney ailments to smallpox.⁵ One seventeenth- to eighteenth-century exorcism manual contains

¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IX, p. 138.

² Ibid, ch. XII, p. 146.

³ Ibid, ch. XIX, p. 158.

⁴ Ibid, ch. X, p. 140.

⁵ 'Exorcisms Used for Treatment of Urinary Tract Diseases in Greece during the Middle Ages and Renaissance', *American Journal of Nephrology* 19:2 (1999), 114-124.

reference to over one hundred physical and mental illnesses which afflict human beings and still more which afflict both humans and animals.⁶ It concentrates mainly on the demons of small pox, headache and the typical disease of possession, epilepsy but there are more general exorcisms which address 'serious diseases' in more general terms.⁷ The eighteenth-century Handbook of Exorcisms makes the relationship between disease and demons explicit. God is asked to '*expel this spirit from your creature because it introduced the present, very serious sickness*'.⁸ Later the exorcist again asks, '*expel from your servant every evil spirit and sickness and every spirit of sickness*.' In fact, as Delatte concludes, no distinction is made between sickness and demonic possession.⁹

It should be stated here that this was not the only view of disease. Some authors, like Michael Psellos, recognise the possibility of a natural cause for disease although they do not necessarily rule out a demonic origin. Later Byzantine saints' lives such as that of Athanasios, Patriarch of Constantinople, recognised the possibility of two causes of disease. The priest Theodore from a village in Bithynia had been suffering from a disease which caused his whole body to burn with fever. A friend of his told him about the great man, Athanasios, and '*how he easily drove away every disease and sickness caused by illness or evil spirits, as the sun 'dispersed' the darkness and morning dew and dissolves them into nothingness, as if they had never existed at all*'.¹⁰ Here a distinction is made between sickness 'caused by illness', that is bodily malfunction, and sickness caused by demonic action. Often, however, the cause of a particular disease is not identified as arising from either cause. In another case, '*a young man named Manuel Bourdes, who lived by the shore of the Kynegoi quarter, was stricken by a disease which is very difficult to cure (either as a result of a demonic attack, or because disease brought it on through the rising of evil and*

⁶ George Pilitsis, 'Of Demons and Disease: An Eighteenth-Century Greek Manual of Exorcisms', *Journal of Modern Hellenism* 11 (1994), p. 144.

⁷ Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', p. 445.

⁸ Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 46.

⁹ Ibid, p. 130.

¹⁰ Alice-Mary Talbot, *Faith Healing in Late Byzantium: The Posthumous Miracles of the Patriarch Athanasios I of Constantinople*, by Theoktistos the Stoudite, Brookline, Massachusetts: Hellenic College Press, 1983, pp. 84-85.

*pestilential humors [sic] to the brain, which doctors say is caused by black bile).*¹¹ Thus, in this example, demonic disease causation does not conflict with natural causation.

Nevertheless, other texts, like Allatios', see disease in purely demonic terms and posit a connection between the actions of a specific demon and a particular disease. The headache demon only brings headaches; the *gello* only childhood and postpartum diseases. As Allatios and Michael Psellos claim, these understandings of disease are representative of the popular outlook and should be distinguished from the official views of the Orthodox church. The hierarchy rejected the one to one relationship between demons and disease as far too corporeal and anthropomorphic.¹² It did not reject demonic causation of disease altogether though. Theologians admitted demons were a cause of disease but in a much more general sense. Examples which Allatios has excerpted from early saints' lives are consistent with this approach. It was said of St Nilus of Rossano, '*after calling the one who discharges the priestly office he ordered him to go into the oratory and, after praying for the sick, to anoint that man with oil of the lamp and send him away.*'¹³ It is clear that sickness was caused by a demon because it departed when the patient was anointed.

In popular discussions of disease, the demons also act under their own volition: the *gello* killed children because of her jealousy;¹⁴ the headache demon goes to crush brains and pull out teeth.¹⁵ The creatures are driven to attack human beings by their own needs. To this motivation can sometimes be added an inherent hatred of the human race. Demons are driven by their natures to seek nourishment, and possess a human or an animal form in order to satisfy their desires.¹⁶ The church authorities

¹¹ Talbot, *Faith Healing*, p. 105.

¹² George Pilitsis, 'Demons and Disease', 14.

¹³ Jean Baptiste Carnandet (ed.), 'De Vita S. Nili Abbatis', *Acta sanctorum : quotquot toto orbe coluntur, vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur*, Paris, 1865-1868, Septembris vol. VII, 1867, chs. 58-59, p. 294 quoted in Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, p. 120.

¹⁴ See chapter 3, p. 117-118.

¹⁵ Provatakis, 'Τὸ "Πεδουλοχάρτι"', p. 420.

¹⁶ Greenfield, *Demonology*, pp. 213-5.

rejected this approach because of its inherent dualism but they accepted that demons were impelled by their anger and hatred of God's creation to attack mankind, and also his animals.¹⁷ For the church hierarchy, the actions of demons must be placed firmly under the power of God. God was the ultimate source of demonic attack. Illness was thought to originate in the wrath of God. Allatios interprets the actions of the *vrikolakas* in this manner. He characterises these creatures as '*the servants of divine wrath*' who having suffered themselves '*also rage against others*'. God punishes the individual sinner, but also the sinful community around him/her. The plague in particular was interpreted in this manner and was seen as the '*vengeance from an angry God*'.¹⁸ However, this view was not exclusively held by the ecclesiastics. During times of plague individuals and communities too questioned their religious practices searching for the reason for God's wrath. Thus the Jesuit Fleuriau wrote that during the plague in Constantinople his mission received the abjurations of many schismatics.¹⁹ This interpretation kept the actions of demons firmly under the control of God and did not allow them any independent action.

Religious healing: popular unction

The way that disease was understood affected the treatment sought. Exorcism, the casting out of demonic forces, is the most obvious remedy for demonic possession. The many exorcism texts still extant testify to its popularity. However, Allatios does not discuss exorcism in great depth. His treatment is limited to the *gello* text and even this is identified as a 'talismán' or 'phylactery' rather than an exorcism. In the section which he devotes to healing, Allatios concentrates above all on the popular practice of unction, called '*ἅγιον ἔλαιον*' or '*ἔλεος*', 'holy oil' as a cure for disease. He provides examples from various saints' lives to reveal the efficacy of this practice. St Sabas (439-532) is described by his hagiographer, Cyril of Scythopolis, anointing a sick woman and returning her to her family freed from demons.²⁰ There

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 29.

¹⁸ Guys, *Sentimental Journey*, vol. 2, p. 257. The plague was a hideous creature who marked the houses that she intended to visit with an indelible sign.

¹⁹ Fleuriau, *Missions*, p. 30.

²⁰ Cyril of Scythopolis, *Lives of the Monks of Palestine*; translated by R.M. Price; with an introduction and notes by John Binns, Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Publications, 1991, ch. 27, p. 124, quoted in Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, p. 20.

is evidence of this practice from saints' lives closer to Allatios in time. St Athanasios used oil from the lamp to cure a blind man and '*as soon as the oil anointed his eyes, immediately sweet light entered them, instantly as the saying goes, shining into them.*'²¹ This remedy was not only available to the saints; the laity too used it in healing rituals. Allatios describes how '*very many people stuff silk or cotton, dipped in oil from a lamp lit before the said divinities, into a hollow reed in order to preserve the oil uncontaminated by other substances.*'²² This oil was then taken home and used to anoint the '*chief parts*' of the patient.²³ Again, in the life of Athanasios the laity affect a cure using oil they have taken from the tomb of the saints. A woman was suffering from an affliction of the womb, '*but when she went to the tomb of the holy man, she received mercy through anointing herself with oil and was completely relieved of her affliction.*'²⁴

The literal application of oil from the lamp is only one of several remedies which Allatios closely associates with the practice of unction. His use of the terms '*oil from the lamp*' and '*oil of the cross*' shows that in practice he makes little distinction between them.²⁵ In his examples of the practice of anointing, St Sabas uses oil from the cross, whereas in the example which follows, from the *Life* of St Nilus of Rossano, the saint uses oil from the lamp to drive out the demons.²⁶ According to Allatios, the oil used in the former case is so called because it was taken from a lamp burning before a cross in Jerusalem. Again, it could also be so described if the oil itself was exuded from the cross. Tournefort, however, provides an additional explanation. It is called oil of the cross because it has pieces of the true cross mixed into it.²⁷ Allatios also includes a much wider range of practices in his explanation,

²¹ Talbot, *Faith Healing*, p. 81.

²² Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, p. 118.

²³ There seems to be no consensus on the exact parts of the body to which this refers. A little later Allatios describes the anointing of the eyes, ears, nose, mouth and chest but during the sacrament of unction, it was the eyes, nose, cheeks, and the palm and the back of the hand on which the oil was rubbed. Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, p. 122.

²⁴ Talbot, *Faith Healing*, p. 91.

²⁵ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, p. 122.

²⁶ Ibid ch. IV, p. 120; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Lives*, ch. 27, p. 119; Carnandet, 'De Vita S. Nili Abbatis', chapter 58-59, p. 294.

²⁷ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 95, margin note.

for oil which had been blessed with the sign of the cross could also be called '*oil from the cross*'.²⁸

Thus, the practice of unction does not necessarily require oil taken from the lamp. Allatios writes that '*others drive away illness not with oil from the lamp, but [with oil] which they themselves bless*'.²⁹ For example, a disciple of St Theodore the Studite anoints a sick girl with oil blessed by the saint, and she is cured. Neither does the liquid necessarily have to be oil. Water which has been sanctified by various methods can also be given to invalids to aid their recovery. This ranges from taking the water used to wash the altar after the celebration of the Eucharist, to the water used to wash the feet of the men standing in for the twelve apostles, in the re-enactment of the events described in John 13:1-9.³⁰ There it is related how Christ washed the feet of his followers on the evening before Passover. The reputed healing qualities of the water thus treated is reported in great horror by travellers during this period.³¹ Herbs and shrubs can be used in such healing practices too. If no oil is available Allatios relates how people take the plants which have been hung around the icons of the saints in the church, and use these rather than oil to anoint the principal parts of the invalid: '*This was also called sacred oil from the original application of the remedy although it was not oil*'.³²

Unction not only has the power to expel demons, it also addresses another cause of sickness, the wrath of God. It was extremely closely bound to repentance. For the Patriarch Jeremias unction, like baptism and repentance, offered the opportunity of forgiveness: '*And to those who commit sins after Baptism, repentance and anointing (sic) by Holy Unction offer forgive (sic) and clean the spots from the soul*'.³³ For the Russian metropolitan, Moghila, a century later, confession was an essential precondition of unction and he writes that the invalid must have '*before*

²⁸ Allatios, *De opin*, ch. IV, p. 122. See also below, pp. 201-203 where the rite of unction is described. The oil from the lamp there is signed with a cross during the ceremony.

²⁹ *De opin*, ch. VI, p. 124.

³⁰ Ibid, ch. VI, p. 124. Goar, *Euchologion*, pp. 591-597.

³¹ Covell, *Diaries*, p. 156.

³² *De opin*, ch. IV, p. 122.

³³ Jeremias II (1572-1579; 1580-1584; 1586-1595). Tsirpanlis, *Jeremiah*, p. 43.

hand confessed all his sins unto his spiritual father'.³⁴ This statement relates not to popular unction, but to the sacrament of the same name. Although Allatios does not discuss this, it is important to consider it here because it contains a clear statement of the official Orthodox interpretation of religious healing. Therefore an understanding of the sacrament of unction is essential for an investigation of the relationship between popular and official healing, and this in turn is necessary to analyse Allatios' own understanding of the popular practice.

It is evident from Rycaut's description of the Mystery of *Euchelaion*, or '*Oyl of Prayer*' that this sacrament was performed in the seventeenth century.

*'This Oyl of Prayer is pure and unmixed Oyl without any other composition a quantity whereof, sufficient to serve for the whole year, is consecrated on Wednesday in the holy Week by the Archbishop or Bishop, though it may be administred (sic) or application made by three priests. This is the same with that which in the Roman Church is called Extreme Unction, grounded on the words of James Cap. 5.14.'*³⁵

This is administered to '*such penitents who are sick and languishing*'. This describes the same practice as is carried out today and the prayers cited by Rycaut are identical to those used in the current celebration of the sacrament.

Thus in Allatios' time, the sacrament of unction, called *Εὐχέλαιον* or '*Ἅγιον Ἐλαίον*' was celebrated on the Wednesday or Thursday of Holy Week. In this ceremony the oil to be used for the rest of the year was consecrated, and the whole congregation, not only the sick, was anointed. The remaining consecrated oil was preserved and used during the rest of the year for ceremonies of anointing of the sick as and when required, although often the whole ceremony was carried out again. The number of priests needed to perform the ceremony varied. Rycaut states that although the consecration of the oil must be performed by a bishop or archbishop, the anointing may be carried out by three priests. The Russian metropolitan Moghila, following in the Byzantine tradition, preferred the ritual to be carried out by seven priests, from whence the name *heptapapadon*, but, acknowledging the difficulties of this, allowed that it could be carried out by three, as indicated by Rycaut above, two or even one in

³⁴ Peter Moghila, *Confession*, p. 118.

³⁵ Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 266.

cases of emergency.³⁶ However, the *Nomokanon* of Malaxos, the most important text guiding the conduct of the church in the early modern period, forbids the celebration of this sacrament by one priest alone.³⁷ Nevertheless, the fact that he felt it necessary to legislate on the matter reveals the difficulties encountered in gathering priests together in these uncertain times. Moghila, in accepting the performance of the rite by a single priest, is merely bowing to the necessities of circumstance.

As Rycaut's description suggests, the ritual was divided into two parts: the consecration of the oil and the anointing of the invalid. Before the ceremony of consecration began a very large lamp was filled with oil, and, in addition, each priest held his own lamp and lit it, and blessed the oil within as the service proceeded. The ceremony began with prayers. This was followed by the consecration of the oil through the prayer:

*'O Lord, who with the oil of thy mercies hast healed the wounds of our souls, and of our bodies, do thou sanctify this oil in that manner, that those who are anointed therewith may be freed from their infirmities and from all corporeal and spiritual ills.'*³⁸

Only once the oil had been consecrated did the ceremony of anointing begin. The readings and prayers were related to the healing ministry of Christ and his apostles. The actual anointing of the patient took place at the same time as (or after) the prayer of anointing, which each priest recited separately:

*'Holy father, physician of our souls and our bodies, you sent your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ to heal every infirmity and deliver from death. Now heal your servant of the bodily sickness that holds him in its grasp. Do this in accordance with the favour you have shown us in your Christ, and give life, according to your good pleasure, to him who shows his gratitude to you by his good actions.'*³⁹

This prayer recognises Christ's role as a healer and emphasises that any healing resulting from the anointing came from Christ rather than the priest or the oil itself.

³⁶ Elie Mélia, 'The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick: Its Historical Development and Current Practice', in *Temple of the Holy Spirit: Sickness and Death of the Christian in the Liturgy*, translated by M. J. O'Connell, 21st Liturgical Conference of St Serge, New York: Pueblo, 1983, p. 134.

³⁷ . . . Sideridas, "Περὶ τινός ἀντιγράφου τοῦ Νομοκάνονος τοῦ Μανουὴλ Μαλαξοῦ", *Ἑλληνικὸς Φιλολόγικος Σύλλογος* 30 (1908), 30 (1908), canon , 137.

³⁸ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 335; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, pp. 340-341.

³⁹ Mélia, 'Anointing', 1983, p. 152.

As he recited the prayer, each priest took a cotton-tipped wand, dipped it into the consecrated oil and anointed the patient. The number and parts of the body to which the oil was applied varied according to the manuscript, but usually it was the eyes, nose, cheeks, and the palm and the back of the hand.⁴⁰ Finally, the gospel was held face down over the individual while the last prayer was said. The ceremony was concluded with the absolution read by the priest.

The sacrament of unction justifies and explains the role of the church in the healing process. It cites Christ's healing miracles which bear witness to his healing ministry here on earth. The work also reminds the congregation of Christ's commands to his disciples in Matthew 10, 1, 5-9: '*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely ye have received, freely give.*' The parable of the Good Samaritan provides an example of the use of oil as a healing agent.⁴¹ Most importantly, during the rite the passage in James 5.14 is read, and it is from this that sacramental status of the practice is derived: '*Is one of you ill? He should send for the elders of the congregation to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer offered in faith will save the sick man, the Lord will raise him from his bed, and sins he may have committed will be forgiven.*' Thus the rite emphasises Christ's work as a healer and asks that he continue to heal the '*wounds of our souls, and of our bodies*', of both '*corporeal and spiritual ills*'. Moreover, it shows how the church is urged to follow his example, placing the healing of the sick within its jurisdiction.

As we have seen above, in Orthodoxy the soul and body are considered to be closely bound together. The condition of the body is affected by the state of the soul and therefore the sickness of the body is connected to the health of the soul.⁴² For the body to return to health, the sickness of the soul must be addressed. This is why unction, the sacrament concerned with physical healing, is so closely tied to

⁴⁰ Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 338; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 345. In the rite of 1027 it was the face, breast and hands, Mélia, 'Anointing', p.152, and in the ninth-century Barberini *Euchology*, the forehead, ears and hands, p. 153.

⁴¹ Luke 10:34.

⁴² See chapter 4, p. 146 above.

repentance and the cleansing of sin, seen as the sickness of the soul. Although sickness was viewed as a result of specific sins, either of the individual or of society, it was above all a consequence of the general sinful state of mankind and an inevitable part of life in the worldly sphere after the expulsion of the first humans from the garden of Eden. Before Adam and Eve rebelled against God, creation was immortal and perfect. This is the 'natural' state of creation, that is, the state it was in when it was first created, when it was in harmony with God. It was the sin of Adam and Eve, their rebellion against God's will, which distorted the perfect relationship between God and his creation and brought decay and death. Corruption and decay are associated with the worldly sphere alone. Thus there is a connection between the distorted relationship with God, and the mortal, corruptible state of creation. It is necessary to repair this relationship in order to approach as near as possible the 'natural' state, where disease and corruption are banished.⁴³ This is done through repentance and forgiveness of sins.

If repentance restores the relationship with God, the blessing of the priest sanctifies the individuals, or the items, and allows them to partake of the divine sphere. The sacrament of unction includes both these elements. The Patriarch Jeremias II wrote of it:

*'Holy oil, according to tradition, is also a sacred celebration and a symbol of divine mercy, which is given to effect redemption and sanctification for those who repent and change their sinful mind. That is why it is granted as forgiveness of sins, and it heals illnesses and fills the human soul with sanctity.'*⁴⁴

Anointing with the holy oil confers forgiveness of sins for those who have repented; not only this, it also raises up the human being to God restoring mankind and nature to its natural created state before the fall, before corruption and death held sway.

This is why in Orthodoxy all are anointed with the consecrated oil on Maundy Thursday, for all are sinners, and located in the worldly sphere, prone to disease and corruption. It also explains why religious remedies are efficacious for all disease, not

⁴³ Meyendorff, *Theology*, pp. 134-135; Stanley Samuel Harakas, *Health and Medicine in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition: Faith, Liturgy and Wholeness*, New York: Crossroad, 1990, p. 35.

⁴⁴ Tsirpanlis, *Jeremiah*, p. 44.

just that which has been explicitly caused by demons. This is apparent in the popular sphere too. There is no mention of demons in the account of the illness of emperor Michael IX (1293-1320), which Allatios excerpts from Pachymeres. The emperor 'seized by sadness and mourning on account of what had happened there, he fell gravely ill, and clearly losing interest in life, he was brought into extreme danger'.⁴⁵ Neither is there any suggestion of demonic possession in the case of Allatios' own illness. He writes of himself: 'I was no older than seven when I was laid up [in bed], suffering from a serious illness.'⁴⁶ In neither case was there any mention of demonic cause, nor any departure of demons with the cure. In both cases, however, religious healing is employed.

The relationship between the sacrament of unction and the popular practice

The sacrament of *euchelaion* and the popular practice have many elements in common. Most obviously they are drawn together in the act of anointing. Whereas in the popular practice blessed oil, oil from the lamp and oil of the cross exist separately as remedies for disease, the oil used in the sacrament combines these three methods of sanctification. The oil used is taken from the lamp, signed with a cross, and blessed by a priest. In the practices described by Allatios the relationship between healing and God is explicitly recognised in the alternative name given to the practice by Allatios. It is not only called 'ἄγιον ἔλαιον' but also 'ἔλεος' or Mercy. This is because it is through the oil that the mercy of God is conferred upon the sufferer, healing both body and soul. A statement in the *Life* of the fourteenth-century Patriarch of Constantinople, Athanasios, reveals the connection which existed between the two. Oil from the lamp burning before the shrine of Athanasios was found to relieve the pain of many people suffering from urinary problems. The author writes 'this oil was simply transformed into mercy (ἔλεος) instantly and unbelievably by those who used it and anointed themselves with it in faith'.⁴⁷ The oil was called mercy because it conveyed God's mercy upon the invalid.

⁴⁵ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. V, pp. 120-122. Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, vol. 2, 5:10, pp. 391-392.

⁴⁶ *De opin.*, ch. V, pp. 122-3.

⁴⁷ Talbot, *Faith Healing*, ch. 44, p. 94 lines 19-21.

The link between sin and disease, repentance and health is not explicitly expressed in Allatios' discussion of popular healing, but sin was, as we have seen, a common interpretation of the cause of sickness. Again, although Allatios does not discuss the relationship between repentance, sanctification, and healing, the connection with the blessing pronounced by the priest, which alters the nature of corruptible earthly matter, is expressed in other popular practices surrounding ecclesiastical rituals. At Epiphany water was collected up in jars after it had been blessed. The blessing performed a miracle, for when the jars were full '*as much wine is drawn from the tap, as water went into the cask.*' These vessels should be taken to the sick and used to fortify children. However, '*if greed turns it to personal use, not long after it turns to vinegar.*'⁴⁸ If those using it turn it to selfish rather than charitable purposes, once again the wine becomes subject to the laws of this world and corrupts. This is also why the corruption of the Eucharist elements, discussed in an excerpt from Pachymeres, was viewed so seriously, as it related either to past sins or to an ominous future event.⁴⁹ These substances, transformed through the blessing of the priest, are raised above the worldly sphere and are not normally subject to corruption and decay. People claimed that '*the water blessed on the day of that benediction [Epiphany] neither corrupts nor becomes stale.*' Moreover, '*they relate the same concerning the consecrated bread which they claim suffers no corruption and putrefaction.*'⁵⁰ This is why the Eucharistic elements and the water blessed at Epiphany should not decay or become stale.

The appeal to saints and the Virgin Mary was also important in both popular and official unction. The Virgin is appealed to many times throughout the sacrament as the 'refuge' for the sick individual and this is how Allatios describes her in his discussion of the popular practice.⁵¹ It is in the prayer of anointing, however, that the role of saints are most evident in the sacrament. It asks that the sick person be healed through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, the might of the Christ, John the Baptist,

⁴⁸ Allatios, *De opin*, ch. XXIV, p. 170.

⁴⁹ Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, vol. 2, 1:28, pp. 77-78; Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXIV, pp. 73-7.

⁵⁰ Allatios, *De opin*, ch. XXIV, p. 172.

⁵¹ Ibid, ch. IV, p. 118.

the Apostles, the *Anargyroi*: Cosmas and Damian, Cyrus and John, Panteleimon and Hermolaus, Samson and Diomedes, Photius and Anicetas; and Joachim and Anna, the parents of Mary.⁵² The pairs of *anargyroi*, or unmercenary doctor saints are particularly apt intercessors. In the popular practice, the anointing with the oil creates a link between the patient and the saint as the patient was then commended to *'the saint from whose lamp the oil comes.'*⁵³ It places the saint in a position of protector over the invalid, encouraging him or her to act as an intercessor.⁵⁴

The practice of reading the gospels over the invalid also has currency outside the sacrament. The missionary, Father Richard, reports how an Orthodox priest tried to heal his wife who was having difficulties while in labour by reading the gospels over her.⁵⁵ Again, Covell recounts that this was the method used by a priest to cure headaches and other pains: *'Those that have pains in their heads or are ill come to the priest and lean down their head...on which he lays his book and reads some piece of the gospel.'*⁵⁶ All these practices, as they form part of the sacrament, can be explained in terms acceptable to the church.⁵⁷ The words of the Gospels encourage and fortify the patients and raise their minds to appeal to God. The unction, using a blessed or sanctified substance, marks out the penitent and communicates God's blessing to him. Thus they fit into the cosmology proposed by the ecclesiastical authorities, where God is sovereign in the universe, and his blessings or words, and his saints, or soldiers at arms, have the power to overcome the attacks of the devil.

It is not surprising, therefore, that I have found no prohibitions of the popular practice of unction in the *nomokanones* of the period. The compatibility means that the practices of unction described by Allaitos, unlike those described in earlier chapters, were acceptable to the Orthodox church. The popular practice of unction,

⁵² Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 338; trans. Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 345.

⁵³ Allatios, *De opin*, ch. IV, p. 119.

⁵⁴ See chapter 1, p. 56 above where the act of naming exerts a force and creates a link between the namer and the named.

⁵⁵ Richard, *Relation*, p. 398.

⁵⁶ Covell, *Diaries*, p. 144.

⁵⁷ Harakas, *Health*, p. 101. In the fifth century the Roman church allowed the faithful to anoint with oil which had already been prepared by the bishop.

unlike the practice of exorcism, is not in danger of pulling adherents into the heresy of dualism.⁵⁸ Moreover, it retains a focus on the church. The laity use oil already blessed by a priest or bishop, or oil or other object placed before an icon in the church. The church and its rites are the source of power for these objects. Thus in this interpretation popular unction neither contravenes the theology of the church, nor really threatens its monopoly of supernatural power. Therefore popular unction, unlike the other popular beliefs and practices described by Allatios, is not outlawed by the church. Unction is acceptable and meaningful for church and laity alike, fitting into both popular and official understandings of the way the world works.

Popular healing

In spite of these similarities, there are differences in the way the theologians and the laity understood the practice of unction. For the theologians, the blessing of the priest was vital for the sanctification of the oil. This did not make the oil powerful in itself, but transformed it into a vessel through which God's blessing was communicated. Neither was bodily healing a necessary result of the anointing. A cure depended upon the will of God, hence the appeal to the saints to intercede with Christ on behalf of the patient. In Allatios' description of popular unction these factors are not necessarily present. The practices he outlines do not depend on the sanctification of the oil by a priest for their power: he makes a distinction between oil that has been blessed and oil which is taken from a lamp, suggesting that oil becomes holy through different means in each case. In fact, the Orthodox church does use consecrated oil in these lamps, although, on the grounds of the distinction he makes, Allatios perhaps was unaware of this. However, not all the practices associated with popular unction involved oil. Garlands of flowers or water, for example, which had been brought into contact with a holy object such as an altar or an icon become charged with holiness in themselves. Popular practices of anointing do not require the ointment to be blessed by a priest.

⁵⁸ See chapter 1, p. 58 above.

The beliefs and practices of the laity must be seen in their own context. Along with unction people turned to other practices which were not so acceptable to the church. Unction was only one of a panoply of remedies available and it was used indiscriminately with amulets and popular exorcisms which had been proscribed by the church. The latter methods were rejected because they attributed power to objects and rituals themselves, and so suggested alternate sources of power to God.⁵⁹ In the same way, in the popular rite, the oil or other substance takes on this power. The popular beliefs surrounding unction must be seen in their religio-magical context. Admittedly, it is the association with icons, ecclesiastical objects or rituals which charges the oil or water with power, but that substance is then deemed to be powerful in itself. On asking why all struggled for the water in which the feet of the 'Apostles' had been washed on Maunday Thursday, Covell was told that '*it must be precious after so many good prayers*'.⁶⁰ The prayers had made the water holy in itself. In the same way, Allatios describes how contact with the altar after the most holy celebration of the Eucharist charged the water with holiness. Likewise, the oil absorbs sacred power through being placed in close proximity to an icon of a saint or the cross, or after being blessed. Indeed, the early church had been aware of the propensity of unction to be understood in magical terms and had taken care to try to prevent this taking place in the sacrament.⁶¹

It is the holiness that the oil has attained which gives it the power to expel the disease from the body. The demon cannot bear the presence of the holy substance and is driven from its host. Through the anointing of the patient with oil on 'chief parts' of the body, the disease or demon was driven from it. It is interesting that in the popular practice described by Allatios, these parts are identified as the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth and heart. For the church this anointing sanctifies the senses. However, the popular practice should also be placed in the context of beliefs about the demons attacking the body - after all they turned to unction to expel the demon and protect against further attack. The demon was believed to enter the body through

⁵⁹ See chapter 1, p. 64 above.

⁶⁰ Covell, *Diaries*, p. 156.

⁶¹ Méliá, 'Anointing', 1983, p. 133; Meyendorff, *Theology*, p. 199.

'openings'. The eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth were portals through which the demon could attack. The chest housed the heart, thought to be the seat of the soul, and therefore the place where the demons tried to lodge themselves.⁶²

Although the chrism of baptism should not be confused with the sacrament of unction, attention should be drawn to the common exorcistic and apotropaic power of the oil in both cases.⁶³ In baptism the oil is first consecrated and sealed and then the candidate is anointed. The purpose of the anointing is to seal the baptizand against the temptations of the devil. In earlier rites, the anointing with oil had an exorcistic function too, continuing the programme of exorcisms which takes place in baptism itself.⁶⁴ This function of oil is clearly seen in accounts of miraculous healings in saints' lives. In the *Life* of Nilus of Rossano it is the anointing which drives out the demon: '*When the deed was done, immediately the young man was restored to health and the demon departed from his nostrils like a puff of smoke.*'⁶⁵

Allatios and popular practices

Allatios, however, understands the popular beliefs not in their own terms but in those of official theology. He uses the official understanding of unction to explain the popular practice of ἀπομύρωμα. Ἀπομύρωμα is the name given to the water which has been used to wash the altar after the celebration of the Eucharist. Allatios, in typical fashion, explains the meaning of ἀπομύρωμα in relation to the etymology of the word.⁶⁶ He explains that ἀπομύρωμα '[literally] means the washing after the True Unction which is Christ'.⁶⁷ Christ is the True Unction or Myrrh, as described by the Pseudo-Dionysios, and has a presence in the Eucharist. Therefore

⁶² See chapter 5, p. 179 above.

⁶³ Kelly, *Baptism*, pp. 136-7; 169. Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 146.

⁶⁴ See chapter 2 above, p. 76-77.

⁶⁵ Carnandet, 'De Vita S. Nili Abbatis', chs. 58-59, p. 294; Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, pp. 121-122.

⁶⁶ Compare the etymological expositions of Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XII, p. 142, for the *vrikolakas*; ch. XXIX, p. 176 for the caterpillar.

⁶⁷ Ibid, ch. VI, p. 124. In the Old Testament anointing was often associated with the anointing of kings. Additionally, it conferred on the one anointed the special favour of God. Christ, as son of God and King of Heaven and Earth, was the Anointed One par excellence. In fact, the name Christ or *Christos* literally means 'the Anointed One'. It is derived from *Chrisma* or anointing. Messiah too has the same meaning coming from the Hebrew '*Mesach*'.

ἀπομύρωμα' is the water used for washing the altar after (*apo*) the true unction (*myrrh*), that is after the celebration of the Eucharist.

Allatios explains the efficacy of the practice in terms of the connection which it establishes with the divine. He bases his explanation on a difficult passage from Dionysios the Areopagite.⁶⁸ In fact, Dionysios wrote not to explain the anointing of the sick but chrism of baptism and the anointing of the dead, but his work *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* is appealed to for the efficacy of the sacrament of unction. Dionysios uses the 'language of sense perception'⁶⁹ to describe the contact between the mind of human beings and the divine. Fragrance refers both to the fragrance of the oil, and symbolically to the infusion of the spirit, and establishes a link between the anointing and Christ. The anointing both symbolically and actually bestows contact with the divinity. It acts as a channel for the divinity to flow through and establishes contact between 'the initiates and the spirit of the Deity.'⁷⁰ The consecrated oil confers the blessing on to the one anointed and allows the spirit of God to enter him/her. Unction thus confers the grace of Christ on the anointed. Moreover, Christ himself was the essence of the anointing, the true unction. This meaning comes through in 1 John 2.27: '*But as for you, the initiation (lit. anointing chrism) which you received from him stays with you: you need no other teacher, but learn all you need to know from his initiation, which is real and no illusion. As he taught you, then dwell in him.*'⁷¹ The anointing by Christ allows his holy spirit to pour into the soul of the individual and guide his/her future life as a true Christian.

For Rycaut it has a different meaning:

'This sacrament, as they call it, of the Holy Oil, said by some to be different from that which is called apomurismos which is administered to unhealthy people who are fallen into mortal sins, which pollute the Body as well as the Soul, and takes its Original from the parable of the Good

⁶⁸ Allatios, *De opin*, ch. VI, p. 124.

⁶⁹ Pseudo Dionysius, 'Ecclesiastical Hierarchy', 3:4, 480 A p. 229

⁷⁰ *ibid*, p. 228.

⁷¹ Translation from New English Bible. Good News Bible translates chrism as "poured out his spirit on you", which although less literal, does reveal the link, which becomes clearer in the light of the works of Pseudo-Dionysios the Areopagite.

*Samaritan in the gospel, who poured Oyl [myrrh] into the wounds of him who fell amongst Thieves.*⁷²

Apomurismon here is not the water after the Eucharist, but a form of anointing with oil, which is very similar to the sacrament of unction. The word therefore retains its association with unction. The healing elements are emphasised by the connection to the story of the Good Samaritan, one of the few Biblical stories where oil is used for medical purposes.

There are still other definitions of *ἀπομόρωμα*, indicating the range of practices it could refer to. In Lampe's *Patristic Lexicon* the word merely refers to holy oil with healing properties. The word is also used for the fragrant fluid which is believed to exude from the relics of distinguished saints,⁷³ such as that from the body of St Demetrios, mentioned by Allatios. He writes that all should be anointed with oil from the lamp at the vigil office '*on the 26th of October on the festival of St Demetrius if the unguent which flows from his body does not suffice. If it is present then let the brothers be anointed with it*'.⁷⁴ In all cases, however, it is linked to practices surrounding unction. Although there are many different applications of the word, all of them refer to unction and the healing which it provides.

In describing popular unction in these terms Allatios removes it from the context of popular healing, separating it out from practices such as popular exorcism and use of amulets. While he dismisses the latter as 'laughable', the former he believes '*indeed [point to] the manifest piety which still shines forth in the Greek nation*'.⁷⁵ Thus he emphasises that these healing rituals of the Greeks should be seen in a positive light, and indicate the true piety of their natures. Moreover, unlike the appeal to amulets, unction is efficacious since without recourse to a doctor '*they procure help for themselves against evil things through the various acts of piety*'.⁷⁶ Allatios therefore does not include it with magical and talismanic practises but considers it acceptable and consistent with the theology of the church. It should be emphasised that no such

⁷² Rycout, *Churches*, p. 267.

⁷³ Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, s.v. '*ἀπομόρωμα*'.

⁷⁴ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, p. 119.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, ch. VI, p. 125.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, ch. IV, p. 119.

distinction would have been made by the people themselves. It is imposed on the practices by Allatios and indicates his own endorsement of popular unction.

Allatios' acceptance and even approval of popular unction is evident when his treatment of this practice is contrasted with his discussion of other popular methods of healing. From his text it is clear that amulets and exorcism also play a role in lay healing but his examination of these practices is far less detailed than his discussion of unction. He quickly passes over the use of amulets to turn away evil. Some use garlic, he writes, '*others [use] red coral and other things which I need not itemise individually. Yet others conduct themselves more piously since they place the cross of the Lord or his image near the child.*'⁷⁷ He then moves on to discuss these pious practices, namely unction, in more detail. The coverage of amulets is less cursory if the treatment of the *gello* exorcism is included. Allatios classifies these as '*talismans or amulets*', for the prayers contained within the tale ward off the *gello*.⁷⁸ Whoever has possession of the prayer will not be attacked by the creature, and nor will she be able to enter a house in which the prayer is placed. Thus the exorcism ritual has the same effect as an amulet. Moreover, associating the exorcism ritual with amulets casts a negative light on its use, and this is borne out by Allatios' comments. He includes the exorcisms in his text because their stupidity will make Zacchias laugh, and sums them up as '*absurdities*'.⁷⁹ Moreover, although the texts themselves are long, Allatios' comments do not expand or add anything to explain the practice.

He then moves on to attack those '*silly men*' who peddle such cures, presenting a caricature of false piety. Such a man puts on a show of humility, drawing back to let others pass, bowing his heads to them and murmuring to himself. When he is aware of others watching him he retires to a church and remains there until, exhausted, '*or rather because there is no one there to see him*', he leaves.⁸⁰ He emphasises his close relationship with God and the power of his prayers. His actions are well judged to increase his reputation for piety, and he knows that the '*the pious man and a friend of*

⁷⁷ Ibid, ch. IV, p. 118.

⁷⁸ Ibid, ch. VII, p. 126.

⁷⁹ Ibid, ch. VII, p. 136.

⁸⁰ Ibid, ch. VIII, p. 137.

*the destitute is necessary on other occasions but is particularly necessary at this point in time, when disasters rush in from all sides.*⁸¹ He emphasises his power to help people, listing those to whom he has brought fortune, and the amulets he has with which he can heal illnesses of all kinds. However, he reminds his witnesses that although he acts without hope of reward, often he is showered with gifts. He is therefore careful with his powers, not wishing his piety to be called into question and curtails his beneficence, caring for the spiritual ills alone, rather than the physical. The people, however, are unaware of his duplicity, and that *'rather than supporting others, he first uses others to support himself.'*⁸²

This dishevelled character bears some resemblance to the travelling monks, which were a feature of life in seventeenth-century Greece. The monasteries of Mount Athos, and those in other areas, sent out messengers from their monasteries with wares to collect alms from the outside world. This practice continued into the nineteenth century, and the description of the traveller Pashley closely corresponds to that of Allatios. He described one such monk in these terms:

*'His dress consisted of a single coarse garment, under which he wore an iron chain...he was regarded as a man sent by God, (he professed a divine mission)...His fare was most simple...He professed not to receive any money from his hearers: nevertheless, at the end of his discourse, he used to tell the people, that although his reward was not of this world, still he had left a poor monastery on the Holy Mountain, where six hundred kalógheri were praying and fasting, daily and hourly for the sins of a wicked world.'*⁸³

Pashley also meets a second monk carrying a case of relics through the land in order to obtain alms for his monastery.⁸⁴ Rycaut relates that these monks are called *apandochoi* and that they spend five years abroad before returning home.⁸⁵ However, the Archbishop of Samos, Georgirennes, notes that they are only abroad for two to three years. They were supposed to obtain permission from the metropolitan before

⁸¹ Ibid, ch. VIII, p. 137.

⁸² Ibid, ch. VIII, p. 137.

⁸³ Pashley, *Travels*, vol. 2, pp. 237-8.

⁸⁴ Ibid, vol. p. 122.

⁸⁵ Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 212.

seeking alms in his diocese but not all monks were quite so obedient.⁸⁶ A certain monk set out with permission to collect alms for a convent of nuns which fell under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Antioch. However, he was unaware of the boundaries of the jurisdiction and continued to Jerusalem, where, having amassed a considerable sum, decided to continue to Tripoli and then proceed to Europe via Constantinople. At this point he was apprehended by two of the Patriarch's men and forcibly returned home.⁸⁷

It is perhaps significant that these men are first introduced by Allatios in the context of exorcism, for these peripatetic healers and pious men are described in similar terms to the travelling exorcists and preachers of the West. These could capture an audience with their preaching and pious pretence.⁸⁸ In the West, as in the East, the appearance of piety was central to their power. Unlike the sacraments which were dependent upon the office of the individual, the efficacy of exorcism depended upon the individual's power over the demons he commanded.⁸⁹ This in turn rested upon his closeness to God which gave him strength in the struggle against Satan. The church was extremely suspicious of these figures. The western church of the post-Reformation period was very strict on maintaining the residency of clerics. Those who left their posts to wander the roads were punished severely. Many exorcists fell into this category. Moreover, the church felt a need to lay down clearly who should practise exorcism and which rituals were legitimate. It tried to restrict the practice of exorcism to priests licensed by the bishop alone to ensure that only the canonical rituals were performed.⁹⁰ The church was worried that the performance of 'false' exorcisms by unlicensed men could do more harm than good: they could cause the devil to enter a body or strengthen his position there rather than expelling him. This

⁸⁶ Georgirenes, *Description*, p. 99-100.

⁸⁷ Du Bruyn, *Voyage*, p. 100. This is excerpted from Grelot's work. See Grelot, *Late Voyage to Constantinople*, p. 44 ff. The fact that du Bruyn quotes from it suggests that it clarifies and explains his own experience.

⁸⁸ David Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998, p. 118.

⁸⁹ Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 118.

⁹⁰ Gentilcore, *Bishop*, p. 109.

sensitivity surrounding exorcism in the West might suggest why Allatios does not provide any more detailed information concerning the rituals of the East.

Allatios' treatment of exorcism and popular healers therefore stands in contrast to his approval of popular unction. Given this outlook and his explanation of the efficacy of popular anointing in terms of official theology, it is surprising that he does not explicitly link them to the Orthodox sacrament of the same name. Despite his concentration on a wide variety of ecclesiastical practices which play a role in popular unction, such as the blessings of the waters at Epiphany and the washing of the altar after the Eucharist, Allatios never mentions the sacrament of unction. The closest he comes is in an extract taken from a *Typikon*, which describes a ceremony of anointing:

'Then at last the priest distributes the holy oil to the brothers from the lamp of the saint. If, truly, the abbot is honoured with the priestly dignity he anoints the brothers himself with this blessing, dipping in two fingers and not one only. After the sacred oil has been presented, the absolution takes place.⁹¹ And with this sign let him mark the other festivals of saints on which the distribution of holy oil takes place. We celebrate in this manner all the festivals of saints on which vigils take place.'⁹²

Unfortunately I have been unable to trace the *Typikon* from which this extract comes. However, it is possible to deduce from the references to the abbot and the brothers in the quotation, that the extract comes from a monastic *Typikon* rather than the *Typikon* of the Great church which details the services to be carried out on each day of the year. Despite this, it describes a ceremony which comes closer to the sacramental rite than any of the other extracts Allatios quotes from. The rite clearly takes place within a church, and the author is insistent that the one officiating must be a priest. However, there are problems which mean that it cannot be seen as directly representing the rite of the sacrament. Firstly the extract is too short and it is

⁹¹ Here I have based the translation on the Greek rather than the Latin text. Allatios translates 'ἀπόλυσις' with 'dismissio': a sending away, a dismissal, discharge; remission. In modern Greek 'ἀπόλυσις' does indeed have this meaning, i.e. a dismissal at the end of mass. In Ancient and Byzantine Greek, of the period of the *typikon*, however, it designates: loosing, release, deliverance.

⁹² Allatios, *De opin*, ch. IV, p. 119.

impossible to tell what preceded the anointing ritual. Secondly, if the extract is as old as Allatios suggests it is unlikely to describe the sacrament as it existed in the seventeenth century, or the sacramental ritual at all. Unction was only fully accepted as a sacrament in the thirteenth century.⁹³ It continued to develop until it more or less reached its final form in the seventeenth century when the ceremony was standardised with the production of printed versions of the rite of unction.

Nevertheless, this extract does indicate the relationship between unction, repentance and the absolution of sin, although this is somewhat obscured by Allatios' translation. The vital sentence in the Greek is 'μετὰ καὶ τὸ δοῦναι τὸ ἅγιον ἔλαιον γίνεται τέλεια ἀπόλυσις' which can be translated: 'After the sacred oil has been presented, the absolution takes place.' Allatios however translates the Greek 'ἀπόλυσις' with the Latin 'dimissio', and so his translation reads: 'After the sacred oil has been presented, the dismissal takes place.' Admittedly during the early modern period 'ἀπόλυσις' took on the meaning 'to dismiss', and retains this as one of its meanings in modern Greek. However, the text comes from the Byzantine period when 'ἀπόλυσις' held the meaning of absolution. It is very odd that Allatios mistranslates this word. This link between the sinful state of the soul and bodily sickness is clearly expressed in the celebration of the sacrament. Perhaps he was unfamiliar with the details of the rite. However, as an ecumenicist and expert on the rites of the Orthodox church, he would have had a good understanding of the sacramental positions of both eastern and western churches. His compatriot and fellow Catholic, Petrus Arcudius (ca. 1563 - 1633) had written a work on this subject, the title of which amply demonstrates his ecumenical standpoint: *De concordia ecclesiae occidentalis et orientalis in septem sacramentorum administratione*. Amongst other issues this dealt with the question of the sacrament of unction.⁹⁴ Allatios was aware of this work and cites it in his *De opinionibus*.⁹⁵

⁹³ Mélia, 'Anointing', p. 150 identifies the celebration of unction outside Lent as an archaising characteristic. See also Demitrios J. Constantelos, 'The Interface of Medicine and Religion', *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 33 pt.1, (1988), 12.

⁹⁴ Arcudius, *De concordia*, II :De Extrema Unctione, liber quintus, p. 378 ff.

⁹⁵ Allatios, *De opin*, ch. XXX, p. 181.

One reason for Allatios' oversight lies in his concentration on the act of anointing rather than the consecration of the oil. Throughout his discussion of unction, Allatios focuses not on the role of forgiveness in healing, but the act of unction itself. This is because he understands the sacrament of healing in terms of Catholic rather than Orthodox theology. In Catholicism the two effects of unction - forgiveness of sin, and healing effect - were not connected in the same way as they were in Orthodoxy. We have seen that for the Orthodox church healing the soul was a necessary part of healing the body and the healing of sins looks towards a new healthier life in body as well as soul. In the Catholic church the two were not combined in this way: the healing of sin does not have the effect of healing the body. Instead, as the Council of Trent expressed it, it

*'comforts and strengthens the soul of the sick person, by arousing in him great trust in the divine mercy; supported by this the sick person bears more lightly the inconveniences and trials of his illness, and resists more easily the temptations of the devil who lies in wait for his heel; and sometimes he regains bodily health when it is expedient for the salvation of his soul.'*⁹⁶

The role of forgiveness of sin is primarily considered in terms of preparation for the afterlife rather than as an essential part of the healing process.

This arises in part out of the different focus in the Orthodox and Catholic sacraments. For the Orthodox the sacrament focused on healing and the continuing life of the patient as the prayers above indicate in their appeal to the *'Physician of souls and bodies'*. The link between sin and disease meant that even apparently healthy individuals could receive the sacrament. For the Catholic church the focus was on preparation for death. By the time of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the church had modified its earlier position where the sacrament could only be administered on the point of death and it was also allowed to those who were seriously ill. Nevertheless, the focus continued to be on death and the dying. Therefore, as Allatios is interested in healing rather than preparation for death, he does not focus on the importance of forgiveness in the rite.

⁹⁶ Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. I: Trent to Vatican II. London: Sheed and Ward, 1990, p. 710.

The difference in the sacrament between East and West may also be why Allatios does not explicitly link the popular practices of unction to the Orthodox sacrament. In Allatios' work, popular unction is the strongest example of the piety of the Greeks. It is explicitly contrasted with more unacceptable magical practices, and emphasises the true religious nature of the Orthodox population. It shows that the Orthodox population is not entirely stuck in the mire of superstition, as his exposition of the other beliefs and practices might suggest, but has remained true and faithful to its religion. Given the role popular unction plays in casting a positive light on the 'opinions of the Greeks today' it would be unwise to dilute the effect by connecting them to a sacrament over which East and West differed.

Instead, he uses a historical method to reveal the common origins of the practice of anointing in East and West. This was a method which he used many times to defend the Orthodox church and demonstrate the shared history of Orthodoxy and Catholicism. When Urban VIII was considering outlawing the Greek rite for the ordination of bishops, Allatios pointed out that to do so would undermine the Catholic church too, for the churches of both East and West rested on a shared apostolic heritage. Again, in his great work *De consensione* he carefully traces the development of the Orthodox church from its origins.⁹⁷ Here he uses the method on a smaller scale. He presents examples of anointing which come from the history of the early church, the shared history of East and West. In the *Lausiac History*, which provides an account of early Egyptian monasticism, Macarius the Alexandrian treats a sick girl: '*Commiserating [with her] with an outpouring of prayers, and anointing her with holy oil for 20 days with his own hands, he sent her back to her own city cured from evil.*'⁹⁸ Both the Orthodox and Catholic churches accept the accounts of the saints and the miraculous healings brought about in the past through anointing. This is followed by examples from Byzantine saints who were thus shown to be continuing the practices of the early church. Finally, he brings the examples up to

⁹⁷ See introduction, p. 19 below. See also Frazee, '*De ecclesiae*', 54.

⁹⁸ Palladius, *Palladius: The Lausiac History*, translated and annotated by Robert T. Meyer, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1965, p. 61; Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, p. 120.

date with an example from his own life. He describes how he was healed after being rubbed with myrtle leaves which had previously been brushed over an icon.

As this suggests, for Allatios the practice of anointing with oil can be understood in the same way as anointing with other substances - such as water which has been in contact with holy items, or played a part in an ecclesiastical rite. While some use oil from the lamp, others use oil blessed by the saint himself, and others again '*use water from the washing of the holy altar*', or water charged with holiness through other rituals. With this water '*the faithful anoint themselves*'. The holy water, like holy oil, is efficacious against disease. This practice allows him to draw an analogy between eastern practices of unction and western use of holy water. He advises Zacchias: '*concerning the power of holy water against demons, and spells and various sicknesses, [to] see many examples in the writings of Ioannes Stephanus Durand De Ritibus Ecclesiae Catholicae, Book 1, chapter 21, number iv and following*;⁹⁹ and again in Gretser De Benedictionibus.'¹⁰⁰ He then proceeds to give illustrations from western history to prove his point. For example, the water used to wash the hands of Pope Alexander after he had celebrated mass acquired healing properties and cured a woman of her lameness.¹⁰¹ By connecting current Orthodox practice of anointing with oil to the use of holy water he has managed to draw the practice of anointing into the accepted sphere of western practice.

Verification of religious healing: Allatios' own experience

The strongest statement of his position on popular healing comes in his description of his own experience. Allatios' presentation of unction, like other topics in his text, has been heavily influenced by his Catholic ecumenical approach. It enables him to show the positive side of Greek popular practices, the '*serious things*' that he has '*mixed with trifles along the way*', and associate Greek lay practice with similar

⁹⁹ Joannes Stephanus Durand, *De ritibus ecclesiae catholicae*, Paris, apud Dionysium Moreau, 1624, I:21.

¹⁰⁰ Jacob Gretser (1562-1625) was a Jesuit theologian and polemicist, who wrote on a wide variety of subjects. Jacob Gretser, *Libri duo; de benedictionibus et etertius de maledictionibus*, Ingolstadij, 1615, I: 15 pp. 53-64; II:7 p. 92-95; II: 10-20 pp. 101-135; and concerning holy oil: XXII-XXIV, pp. 137-149.

¹⁰¹ Allatios, *De opin*, ch. IV, p. 125.

acceptable practices in the Catholic church. However, such an emphasis on religious healing in the work of a qualified doctor requires some investigation into the relationship between religious and medical healing during the period. How did religious views of disease causation interact with medical understandings?

Allatios' emphasis on the efficacy of unction stands in contrast to the natural causes and cures prescribed by Zacchias. Moreover, this is confirmed by Allatios' own experience of a miraculous cure, which is anchored firmly in the tradition of religious healing. The examples which appear in chapter IV, and Allatios' interpretation of them, lead up to his own experience of healing, which was effected through anointing. Allatios was anointed not with oil, but with myrtle leaves which his mother had rubbed over the icon at the church. Chapter IV, however, concludes with a discussion of the substitution of holy oil from the lamp with herbs which had been hung before the holy image. The latter method *'was also called oil, although it was not oil, because of the original application of the remedy.'*¹⁰² The use of herbs can be assimilated to the use of holy oil from the lamp, and can therefore be understood in the tradition of unction. Like the oil, the herbs are sanctified through the icon of the saint and confer this blessedness on the patient. These herbs are taken home and *'they rub the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth and breast of the invalid'* with them, just as parts of the body are anointed with the holy oil.¹⁰³ This is exactly what Allatios' mother does. Returning home from the church with the sanctified branch of myrtle, she rubbed Allatios' face and chest with the leaf. This instantly restored his sense of perception. He records: *'I opened my eyes, I saw, I recognised my mother who was fussing over me, and I perceived that health had been restored to me by the Virgin.'*¹⁰⁴

Although Allatios' cure was instant, its miraculous nature is confirmed later that night in a vision. This part of his cure has parallels with the extract taken from Pachymeres' *Histories* concerning the miraculous cure of Emperor Michael IX

¹⁰² Ibid, ch. IV, p. 122.

¹⁰³ Ibid, ch. IV, p. 122.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, ch. V, p. 123.

(1293-1320), son of Andronicus II (1282-1343).¹⁰⁵ Michael had fallen ill while far from home, and his illness had defeated all the efforts of the local doctors. His father, as well as sending the best of his own medicines, '*always trusted entirely in the mercy of God and of his most praiseworthy mother*' and, with prayers and services of thanksgiving, sent a monk carrying oil from the lamp.¹⁰⁶ As soon as the monk touched the shore, Michael experienced pleasant dreams in which he was healed. A well-dressed woman removed the ulcer and indicated to him the connection of this cure to the holy oil. Thus the holy oil brought about a great miracle and healed the emperor who was on the brink of death.

Allatios' illness had also defeated the doctors before his mother resorted to religious healing. He too experienced the immediate effect of the holy remedy. However, despite the immediate nature of the cure, he remained in bed, unable to speak. This, as we are told, was not a defect of the cure, but necessary to it, enabling him to witness the proof of its miraculous nature. During the night he experienced a dream, or rather a vision, for he insisted that these things he has not '*heard or dreamed but experienced*'.¹⁰⁷ A train of beautiful women filed through the room, plucking leaves from the myrtle and the final one removed the branch altogether. Allatios was afraid that they were removing his remedy, but was unable to call his mother until all the myrtle had been removed. Finally, recovering his voice, he summoned his mother, who reassured him that the myrtle was still in place. It was not his remedy that had been removed but his illness. Like the emperor, he had experienced healing in a dream. Whereas the beautiful woman in the emperor's dream plucks out the ulcer, in Allatios' vision the women pluck the myrtle leaves, and symbolically, and actually, remove his illness. The vision confirms the miraculous nature of Allatios' cure, as did the dream in the healing of Michael.

Allatios' experience is therefore grounded in the Orthodox tradition. However, by providing an eyewitness account, he also verifies the truth of religious healing,

¹⁰⁵ Pachymeres, *De Michaelē*, vol 2, 5:10, pp. 391-392; Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, p. 120.

¹⁰⁶ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV, p. 122.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, ch. V, p. 124.

stating '*these are things which I have not heard, nor dreamed, but have known well and through experience I believe them to be true.*'¹⁰⁸ This is significant in the light of the scepticism directed towards religious healing by the medical profession in the West. Allatios himself is even a little defensive when he introduces the experience, for he admonishes in Greek '*And do not laugh for I am telling you the truth.*'¹⁰⁹ Indeed, although the addressee of *De opinationibus*, Zacchias, admitted the possibility of miraculous cures, he applied extremely strict criteria before allowing that the cure had been effected through divine intervention. This approach harmonised rather than conflicted with Zacchias' position on the Rota, the Congregation which advised on the veracity, or otherwise, of reputedly miraculous cures. Who better to witness the truth of miraculous 'supranatural' healing than those skilled in natural processes? The testimony of physicians was invaluable to the Counter-Reformation church, with its strict criteria for judging miracles. Zacchias' own testimonies to this effect are contained in the last two volumes of his *Quaestiones medicolegales*, and reveal the meticulous process the Congregation went through before a miracle was recognised as such. All possible natural processes had to be ruled out. Therefore a miraculous cure had to take place instantaneously, without any evacuation of liquid, such as a cure would require under the dictates of Galenic medicine, and not in the final stages of any sickness, as in this case the illness could have had a natural reversal.¹¹⁰ Despite these strict criteria, on occasion Zacchias did acknowledge the possibility of miraculous cures, indeed this was a prerequisite for his place on the Rota.¹¹¹ In the main, however, he was extremely suspicious of supposedly miraculous healing, as Allatios' comments above suggest, and complained that doctors heard of '*miraculous cures of sick people daily, or rather by the hour, even by the minute.*'¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, ch. V, p. 124.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, ch. V, p. 124.

¹¹⁰ Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. iv, tit. 1 q. 8; Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 187.

¹¹¹ See Simon Ditchfield 'How Not to be a Counter Reformation Saint: The Attempted Canonization of Pope Gregory X, 1622-45', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 47 (1992), 397-398, for a discussion of one of his cases.

¹¹² Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. iv tit. 1 q. 1; Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 187.

Allatios therefore is well aware that Zacchias will view his own experience critically and with amusement, associating it with the popular tradition. Given this, it is important to note the extent to which Allatios' illness narrative conforms to the requirements of Counter-Reformation healing miracles. Firstly, he states that his illness was impossible for the doctors to cure. They despaired of his life, and his parents only knew he was alive from the movement of the candle flame which had been placed by his bed for this purpose. Secondly, the miracle was instantaneous. The moment the myrtle leaves touched his forehead he recovered his senses. Thirdly, he distances the event from the possibility of a natural cure. There is no evacuation of substances and he asserts that his cure cannot have occurred through bodily strength because of his continuing weakness after the illness:

*'Wherefore, like children who are unable to move by themselves, I wrapped a bandage around my waist and, hanging on to it, I tried to walk until it was made plain to all that my health was restored, not by the strength of human nature but by the kindness of the blessed Virgin.'*¹¹³

At first sight this seems very strange. Surely if the cure was miraculous it should be complete, and the signs of weakness following the illness to us indicate a natural rather than divine cure? Allatios' cure must, however, be seen in the light of early modern expectations of disease and sickness, rather than those of the twentieth century. Allatios' statement emphasises the weakness of the human body, which reveals its inability to fight off the disease on its own. This is contrasted with the power of the Virgin Mary to act as an intercessor. Despite his weakness, he stresses the completeness of the cure. This was important because miracles were often acknowledged to have occurred by the uneducated laity even when only a mitigation of the symptoms occurred.¹¹⁴ Although Allatios' experience was presented as consistent with the Byzantine tradition, it also conforms to the western requirements for a miraculous cure.

¹¹³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. V, p. 124.

¹¹⁴ Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. iv tit. 1; Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 186.

These pious healing rituals provide a counter-balance to Allatios' presentation of the more 'superstitious' beliefs of the Greeks today. The western church took a very strict view on 'superstitions' and the matters which Allatios touches on. In Italy, from the 1570's onwards, the church's prime concern was not witchcraft but regulating popular beliefs. When talking about these issues Allatios treads a fine line between revealing interesting beliefs and bringing down condemnation on the Greeks for their superstition and irreligious practices. His aim is to present the 'delusions' of the people, but, at the same time, he must take care not to present the Greeks as a people completely given over to superstition and barely Christian in their practices. Indeed, this is a view which often comes across from writers of this time. Missionaries too had to deal with the problems which this caused. After describing two Greeks who were martyred for their faith, the missionary stresses that these examples show that the land of Greece is in no way as spiritually sterile as it was believed to be in France, and that he had found it very fertile.¹¹⁵ It is useful to bear in mind that one function of the Jesuit reports home was to secure further financial support for the mission. It had to be demonstrated that it was a worthwhile enterprise.¹¹⁶ In the same way, it was especially important for Allatios to present a positive view of Greek piety given the suspicious attitude of the papacy towards Greek rites during this period.¹¹⁷ Even in a text on popular religion, Allatios seizes the opportunity to promote his ecumenical perspective.

Allatios therefore presents a sympathetic account of Greek popular practices of unction and sees it as consistent with his Catholicism. His own experience states categorically the efficacy of religious healing and the relevance of healing miracles in his own time. In this he is at one with the popular conception, but in accepting the efficacy of religious healing he comes into conflict with certain scientific trends. The relationship between Allatios' intellectual views and his account of popular beliefs will be the subject of the final chapter.

¹¹⁵ Fleuriau, *Missions*, p. 71.

¹¹⁶ Fleuriau, *Missions*, p. 297.

¹¹⁷ Introduction above, p. 10. See also Allatios, *De ecclesiae*, 3.9, cols 1048-51, 3:10, cols 1057-59.

Allatios and Causality

The previous chapters have revealed the influence of Allatios' ecumenical views on the selection and interpretation of his material. It remains to consider the ways in which the work is related to the medical sphere and investigate what the text reveals about Allatios' approach to healing. It seems peculiar to us that a text on popular beliefs would have resonance in the medical world. Indeed scientists and doctors of the seventeenth-century West were involved in enterprises which were to bring about radical changes in the understanding of the world, developments which have been credited with the eventual split of the world of experience into discrete sections, separating the spheres of magic and religion from science, and subordinating religion to the laws of nature.

However, it must not be forgotten that although Allatios' ecclesiastical works came to the fore in his later life, he was a medical graduate and retained links to the medical world. The *De opinationibus* was written to one of the foremost doctors of the age, Paulo Zacchias. Moreover, the relationship between medicine and religion in Italy at the outset of the scientific revolution is not identical to that today. Rather than speaking of a complete division of these matters during this period it is better to think in terms of a gradual separation of the different spheres, and to remember that the distinctions between medicine and religion, rationality and irrationality were not the same in Allatios' time as they are today. As Peter Burke points out

*'Our modern distinctions (between rational and irrational, natural and supernatural, religious and superstitious), were in the process of formation during the period; to apply them to the years before 1650, in particular, is to invite misunderstanding.'*¹

Despite this warning, it is clear that in the period before 1650 such distinctions were not altogether absent. Zacchias, in the same way as other doctors, had to identify which diseases were caused by demons and which had a natural cause. In his discussion of impotence he distinguishes between nature and *maleficia* as causes of

¹ Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 218.

the condition. *Maleficia* was very difficult to diagnose, because it was marked out by the absence of natural causes and lacked the symptoms normally associated with the affliction. It could also be known through the failure of symptoms to respond to the medical treatment of a doctor.² Thus the characterisation of a disease as 'natural' or supernatural in origin affected the kind of treatment. If the disease was demonic in origin, only a religious cure had the power to deal with the primary cause. If the cause of the affliction was 'natural', it could be treated with medicines derived from the natural world. Therefore the distinction was highly significant.

However, the difference between the healing provided by doctors and that by other healers should not be overestimated.³ The same cures were used by a wide range of practitioners. The efficacy of earth from Malta and Lemnos against snake bite was widely known, and supported by the classical author Dioscorides, whose works provided an impetus to the development of the new chemical medicine.⁴ It was also used by different sectors of the medical community such as Jesuit missionaries and charlatans.⁵ Thus a strict line cannot be drawn between the actions of doctors and priests and their cures cannot be mapped on to the categories of rational and irrational medicine respectively. As well as diagnosing from Galenic principals, doctors could use astrological charts to identify the cause of sickness. The person need not even be present: as long as the doctor knew the date of birth to the hour, he could cast their horoscope and divine the origin of their discomfort.⁶

Moreover, many treatments viewed as 'natural' remedies during this period would no longer be regarded as such. In the East, remedies made from herbs cannot be seen as 'natural' in today's sense of the word. The eighteenth-century traveller Sonnini describes the use of the herb satyrium. It was used both for the cure of tetters

² Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, lib. iii tit. i q.v, p. 229 ff; Joseph Bajada, *Sexual Impotence: The Contribution of Paolo Zacchia (1584-1659)*, Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1988, p. 120.

³ Burke, *Historical Anthropology*, p.213.

⁴ Richard Palmer, 'Pharmacy in the Republic of Venice in the Sixteenth Century', in A. Wear, R. K. French and I. M. Lonie (eds.), *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985, p. 100; Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 107.

⁵ Fleuriau, *Missions*, p. 246; Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 246.

⁶ Genevieve Miller, 'A Seventeenth-Century Astrological Diagnosis', in Charles S. Singleton (ed.), *Art, Science and History in the Renaissance*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1968, 27-33.

(pustular skin eruptions) and believed to keep teeth white and strong. When it first appeared, he was told, you should throw yourself on the ground and bite the white sprouting stem; the whiteness of the stem was believed to indicate the benefit to the teeth. Sonnini, from his Enlightenment perspective, can write of the practices of Greek peasants, '*superstition is always side by side with reality*' and '*they are not content with proper establishment by reason and experiment but seek imaginative ones*'.⁷ No such division existed in the minds of those practising these cures. They were merely making use of the correspondences between worldly things. The whiteness of the stem indicated a connection to the teeth, and imparted its whiteness and toughness to them.⁸

The divisions between 'natural' and 'supernatural' were unclear and do not correspond to our categories. They overlapped and interacted in a way that they do not do today, but, if the sense in which they were used by contemporaries is kept in mind, they can still be useful distinctions to make. After all, the distinctions were, as we have seen, highly significant during the period, and the classification of an illness as natural, or supernatural, determined the appropriate course of treatment, and the type of individual, clerical or medical who would carry it out.

⁷ Sonnini, *Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 177.

⁸ Similar correspondences are revealed in the magico-medical text of the *Kyrianides*. This text exerted a strong influence on Byzantine medical treatises. In the twelfth-century text discussed by Congourdeau such interpretations can be found in almost a third of its chapters. Not all classified such texts as medical however. Possession of the *Kyrianides* played an important role in the conviction of a doctor during the investigations concerning the practice of sorcery carried out by the patriarch of Constantinople. The book was found in the doctor's possession along with texts of Hippocrates and Galen. The church took the possession of this text to indicate his guilt because they saw the book as a magical rather than medical text, and in this they were backed up by their expert witness. D. Kaimakes, *Die Kyraniden*, Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1976; A. Delatte, *Textes latins et vieux français relatifs aux Cyranides*, Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège, Fasc. XCII, Paris, 1942; Fernand Dusaussay de Mely, *Les Lapidaires de l'antiquité et du moyen âge*. (Tom. 2 avec la collaboration de C. E. Ruelle.), 4 vols., Paris: E. Leroux, 1896-1902; Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, "'Métrodôra" et son oeuvre', in Evelyn Patlagean (ed.), *Maladie et Société à Byzance*, Spoleto: Centro di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1993, pp. 57-96; F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana*, 6 vols., Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1860-90, vol 2, p. 343ff. ; Carolina Cupane, 'La magia a Bisanzio nel secolo XIV: azione e reazione', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 29 (1980), 253.

Allatios' text and its medical context

Even though his focus might seem very distant from the work of Zacchias, many of Allatios' discussions have reference points in Zacchias' text. Although Allatios does not wish to go over ground which has already been covered by other authors, including Zacchias himself, elements of the *De opinationibus* show the influence of Zacchias' treatment of similar material. This can be seen, for example, in the discussion of the way the *gello* and the *vrikolakas* kill their victims. The *gello* kills not only by sucking the blood of the children, but also can bring death merely by touching them. The *vrikolakas* a more deadly creature, '*does not kill only with words and by contact, but destroys with his gaze and appearance alone.*'⁹ These categories match those used by Zacchias in his discussion of poisoning. He describes how poison can take effect either through the gaze or touch or through words.¹⁰ Allatios and Zacchias may appear to be discussing two different subjects - Allatios the action of demons, and Zacchias poisons - but in the West the idea of poisoning was still closely bound up with demonic action. Indeed, Zacchias continues his discussion with the assertion that poisoning can take place either through poison itself, or by the work of demons.¹¹ Poison was believed to work in the same way as spells and some doctors even believed that demons could be introduced into the body through poison.¹² Moreover, when Zacchias came to describe the *lamia*, a creature closely associated with the *gello*, he insisted that it killed its victims through the use of poison.¹³ The idea of killing through poisoning is also present in Allatios' discussion of the *gello* for he states that it '*poisons by its contact*'.¹⁴

Further connections to the work of Zacchias can be seen in Allatios' comparison of corpses preserved by demons and bodies of saints preserved by God. For Zacchias the defining difference is that the corpses preserved by God are conserved whole and entire as if the body was still alive.¹⁵ This is exactly the description Allatios

⁹ *De opin*, ch. XII, p. 143.

¹⁰ Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. II tit. ii, q. 13, nos. 1-3, pp. 188-189.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 103.

¹³ Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. II tit. i, q. xvii, p. 150.

¹⁴ Allatios, *De opin*, ch. II, p. 116.

¹⁵ Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, bk. IV, tit. i q. X, nn. 24-25, pp. 320-321.

provides of Greek saints: '[Corpses] of the pious [in contrast] rest in the same condition as when they were alive and are greatly to be revered for their appearance and beauty.'¹⁶

Zacchias' discussion of these topics confirms their relevance to the medical field during the seventeenth century. It was vital for doctors to know about and recognise both demonic and natural illness, for they were ones who were called on to diagnose the condition. During this period religion, which had jurisdiction over the supernatural, and medicine, which was concerned with the healing of the body, overlapped in the treatment of disease. As with miracles where the doctor was called in to verify that a supernatural event had taken place, that is, an event which defied natural processes, so in the treatment of disease, it was the doctor who certified that the disease had no natural causes.¹⁷ Despite Allatios' subject matter, he is not isolated from the medical sphere for he links his discussions of demonic illness to Zacchias' text, and so to a wider field of medical interest.

As we have seen above, however, Allatios has a different approach from that of Zacchias. Whereas Zacchias emphasises natural healing, Allatios focuses on a religious approach to disease. It is curious to find such an emphasis on religious healing in a work written by a trained physician. This might be a reflection of the lack of professional medical care in the East. There were very few doctors, and even fewer in rural communities. Allatios' comment on unction, that '*without any doctor, they devise a remedy for illness in this way*', could be taken to indicate the lack of doctors available, and the extent to which the population was forced back on its own resources. Thevenot supports Allatios' statement and reports that on the island of Andros '*they have neither physician nor Chyrugen but, when they fall sick, take themselves to the Mercy of God.*'¹⁸ Allatios himself had expressed a desire to

¹⁶ Allatios, *De opin*, ch. XVIII, p. 158.

¹⁷ Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 193.

¹⁸ Thevenot, *Travels*, p. 16.

become a doctor in order to help the people of Chios, suggesting a need for ready medical care on the island.¹⁹

As the seventeenth century progressed there were reports of eastern physicians, usually from wealthy Greek or Italian families, who returned to their homeland to practice medicine after completing their studies in the West.²⁰ However, even then the level of care provided was very low, even compared to contemporary western standards. The doctor Spon reported the low level of medical knowledge in Greece.²¹ Tournefort too was scornful of the level of knowledge of the doctors he met outside Constantinople. He was critical of the dietary regimes applied by local doctors to combat fevers for, rather than restoring the patient to health, it reduced him to a bag of bones, and full recovery from a mild affliction took years.²²

Western advances in medical knowledge did not spread to the East quickly for the knowledge these physicians gained in the West did not enter the corpus of Ottoman knowledge for another century.²³ Even respected physicians such as Alexander Mavrocordato, a Chian who rose to prominence as the personal physician of the Grand Vizier, did not use their influential positions to pass on their skills. Mavrocordato had written a treatise on the function of the lungs in the circulation of the blood (1664), discussing Harvey's theories on circulation, while resident in the West. It appears that he never returned to the subject after obtaining his post at the Ottoman court.

However, assessments of western physicians and travellers on the subject of Greek medicine should be treated with care. Compared to medicine today, the western approach was equally inadequate. Tournefort reports how '*the physicians, all over the Levant, are generally Jews or Natives of Candia, old Nurselings of Padua.*' The regimes of fasting and purging they prescribe '*reduces [the Greeks] to Skin and*

¹⁹ Cerbu, *Leone Allacci*, p. 62.

²⁰ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 133.

²¹ Spon, *Voyage d'Italie*, vol. 2, p. 45.

²² Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 133.

²³ G. A. Russell, 'Physicians at the Ottoman Court', *Medical History* 34:3 (1990), 259.

Bones, and they are whole Years in recovering'.²⁴ Even in the nineteenth century western medicine could be life threatening: struck by the number of Italian doctors passing through the Porte, the Italian ambassador remarked that '*the serene republic had not lost its taste for crusades, as by means of its physicians it carried on a constant war against the infidels*'.²⁵ Foreign doctors were subject to the examination and licensing of the chief physician, who was suspicious of the new chemical medicine, '*whose adverse effects exceeded any benefit to be had*'. Such was the suspicion of the new chemical drugs that if the patient died, the doctor was forced to take a dose of his own medicine!²⁶ This was an understandable precaution given the use of highly poisonous substances in the drugs. Paracelsus, for example, had advocated mercury to clarify the spleen.²⁷

There was also hostility to medicine from a different quarter. Sometimes there was competition or antagonism between the various different practitioners. The traveller and doctor Spon came across a man who refused the offer of medical treatment for his wife, saying it would be of no use for the disease was not natural but was caused by the local fairies.²⁸ Similarly, in Delattes' exorcism text, the exorcist warns that often the demon will try to persuade his host that the disease was natural rather than supernatural.²⁹ The natural remedies would have no effect, allowing the demon to remain in residence.

This 'either/or' situation is not borne out in the practice of the laity or in their approach to cures in every day life in the West or East. As in the example of the mortally sick co-emperor Michael IX Palaiologos, the emperor, his father, sent the best of his own drugs as well as offering prayers, thanksgiving services and sending the oil. Although the text places an emphasis on religious healing and miraculous

²⁴ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 133.

²⁵ Pouqueville, *Travels*, p. 194.

²⁶ Russell, 'Physicians', 265-256.

²⁷ John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 69.

²⁸ Spon, *Voyage d'Italie*, vol. 2, p. 31.

²⁹ Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 102.

cure, this does not exclude the medicine of a physician. It merely allows the author to underline the true reliance on religious healing. Similarly, in the seventeenth century, for the most part the laity made the best use of the resources at hand. In 1655 the wife of Sieur Nicolo Foustieri was suffering a difficult childbirth and had been in labour for three days. He went to the Jesuits who said that they had no natural remedies which would help her situation. The man then demanded the relics of St Ignatios of Loyola - obviously the missionaries had already informed him of their power. The Catholic priest replied that they only served those who were devoted to the saint. Foustieri converted and took the relics to his wife. The child was delivered safely and given the name Ignatios after the saint who had saved him.³⁰ This man clearly visited the Jesuits looking for natural medicine, but when this was denied, accepted the offer of relics instead, even though it meant converting to Catholicism. From the point of view of the patient and his/her family, the Jesuits merely offer another source of healing, albeit the last resort, perhaps because of the religious implications. Again, the exorcism text of Delatte, despite rejecting any appeal to medical remedies as demonically inspired, contains a natural remedy to be applied in cases of epilepsy, the most infamous of possession-caused diseases.³¹ The attitude of the husband who refused medical treatment for his wife is also not necessarily the result of a dogmatic rejection of medicine. Spon sees it as arising from a lack of affection between husband and wife. He writes that the husband shed more tears over the loss of money for his wife's burial than for the loss of his wife herself.³²

If Allatios' exclusive concentration on religious healing is not a reflection of popular attitudes, neither is his focus supported by other writers on the East. In contrast to Allatios' interest, many western writers and travellers acknowledge the herbal lore of the Greek population. Their interest was the consequence of developments within western medicine. One way westerners tried to improve their medical knowledge was through a greater understanding of the classical writers. Remedies unearthed

³⁰ Richard, *Relation*, p. 402.

³¹ Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 103.

from the classics had made clear the need for better classification of the plants used in medical recipes. Different plants could bear the same names, and travel in the lands of the classical authors was essential to identify the required species.³³ It was believed by some that knowledge about the ancient plants could be recovered by studying and questioning those who used them. It was felt that the peasantry preserved efficacious remedies which had been known to the ancient writers. Therefore some authors were greatly interested in the cures they provided and the herbs they used.³⁴ The natural magician Fioravanti regarded travel and questioning of the people as the best way to learn the values of the herbs.³⁵ The traveller Pococke believed they preserved the names of '*many a plant well known to those learned Greeks who lived in more enlightened times.*' More important still, they retained the names used by classical writers such as Theophrastus and Dioscorides making it possible to discover the correct plants necessary for their famous but elusive cures, such as mithridatum.³⁶ Western writers therefore acknowledged and recorded local herbal knowledge rather than concentrating on religious healing practices.

The interest in the West was also driven by a new approach to medicine which recognised the varying properties of different plants and the rejection of traditional authorities such as Hippocrates and Galen. It was also given impetus by an increasing demand in the West for supplies of plants to stock botanical gardens, and for the pharmacies.³⁷ Many of the travellers, such as Tournefort and Wheeler were extremely interested in the plants of the East. Wheeler apologises in his preface '*I know some will say, why does he treat us with insipid descriptions of weeds and make us hobble after him over broken stones, decayed buildings and old rubbish?*'³⁸ Tournefort, as might be expected from a practising botanist, frequently describes in detail the plants he comes across: what the leaves are like, where it grows, what it

³² Spon, *Voyage d'Italie*, vol. 2, p. 31.

³³ Palmer, 'Pharmacy', p. 110.

³⁴ Sonnini, *Voyage*, vol. 2, p. 173.

³⁵ Palmer, 'Pharmacy', p. 113.

³⁶ Pococke, *Description*, vol. 2, p. 68.

³⁷ Palmer, 'Pharmacy', p. 113.

³⁸ George Wheeler, *Journey into Greece*, preface.

smells and tastes like, and identifies it with a plants contained in the herbal books he had compiled earlier in his career.³⁹

Thus neither the lack of available physicians nor the climate of western interest can explain Allatios' concentration on religious forms of healing. Professional medical treatment was not the only available alternative to religious cure and there was a wider range of healing than that suggested by Allatios. Neither can it be argued convincingly that Allatios was ignorant of these trends. He had links with botanist circles, demonstrated in his correspondence with the Paduan botanist, Carlo Avanzzi. He also had experience of the new chemical approach to disease, for in one letter to Avanzzi he describes a friend writing a prescription which contained a poisonous chemical ingredient. However, this letter, and another to Moreau, indicates a certain amount of hostility and disillusionment with medicine stemming from an event he witnessed. One evening when with friends he observed a fellow doctor writing out a prescription while under the influence of alcohol. Noticing that the ingredients were highly toxic and likely to do more harm than good he managed to take the prescription from the patient, thus saving his life.⁴⁰

Allatios did not reject medicine completely, however. After his medical training he was aware of the benefits as well as the dangers and limitations of medical healing. Although he gave up practising, he was content that he had learnt enough to minister to his own needs.⁴¹ In the West as well as the East there were those who were opposed to the practice of doctors, but for the most part the two methods of healing did not come into conflict because the primacy of God's will could be maintained: while things in the natural world were admitted as secondary causes of disease, the primary cause remained the divine will. This can be seen in Allatios' interpretation of the *vrikolakas*. The *vrikolakas* has been described above as carrying out the will

³⁹ Tournefort, *A Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 179-180; 187 et passim. *Corollarium Institutionum Rei Herbariae*, no. 21.

⁴⁰ Cerbu, *Leone Allacci*, p. 121.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

of God, spreading disease in order to punish those who have angered Him.⁴² This understanding contrasted with a natural explanation of the epidemic. Many doctors from earliest times believed the cause of the plague to lie in bad or foul smelling air.⁴³ Although Allatios sees the primary cause as the will of God, his description of the revenant taps into this stream too. This is hinted at in Allatios' etymology of the name: '*the name is indicative of foulness. 'Βούρκα' [Bourka] is a swamp; not any swamp, but one which now oozes foul water giving a very bad odour- Mephitis, as I will call it. 'Λάκκος' [Lakkos] is a ditch or cave, which harbours mud of a similar kind.*' The association of the name of the *vrikolakas* with foul smells connects it to such ideas. Indeed he writes that the *vrikolakas* can kill '*infecting them [i.e. its victims] with that poisonous breath of the corpse*'. It is also significant that the excerpts Allatios selects from *The Chronicle of Theophanes* and the *Short History* of Nikephoros the Patriarch are connected to the actions of people terrified by the plague.⁴⁴ Therefore although the primary cause lies with God, God himself works through nature to achieve his will.

Nevertheless, many doctors were beginning to minimise the role they saw for demonic disease and religious healing. Zacchias recommended that a thorough search be carried out for a natural cause rather than taking an easy option and attributing it to *maleficium* or demonic action.⁴⁵ The emphasis on natural causes meant more attention had to be paid to natural cures. This left a smaller and smaller area of demonic action for priests to practice their expertise. Of course, this did not rule out the application of religious remedies in other cases. However, the medical profession rarely credited religious healing with bringing about a cure. The church required doctors to carry out rigorous investigations into the cure of the disease to

⁴²See chapters 4, pp. 148-9; and chapter 7, p. 195 above. Barber, *Vampires*, pp. 8; 57; 68. The revenant was associated with epidemics in many European countries.

⁴³ Marie-Hélène Congourdeau, 'La société byzantine face aux grandes pandémies', in Evelyne Patlagean (ed.), *Maladie et Société à Byzance*, Spoleto: Centro di Studi sull'alto Medioevo, 1993, pp. 21-43.

⁴⁴ Nikephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Short History*, Cyril Mango (ed. and trans.), Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, Research Library and Collection, 1990, Chs. 6-7, pp. 138-9; Theophanes the Confessor, *Chronographia*, H. Turtledove (trans.), Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1982, pp. 112-113; Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XIII, p. 147.

ensure the veracity of the miracle. They had to certify that the cure could not have taken place through natural means. As we have noted above with Zacchias, the medical profession took an increasingly sceptical approach to such happenings, and so for many in medical circles, in contrast to popular circles, religious healing was very rarely proved to be efficacious, and had a correspondingly decreasing role to play in healing. They were moving towards an understanding of disease which primarily saw only one cause of disease, the disequilibrium of the natural world.⁴⁵

In contrast, Allatios' own experience states categorically the efficacy of religious healing, and the relevance of healing miracles in his own time. However, this works alongside natural causes. In this he is at one with the popular conception. Both Allatios and the popular tradition in Greece which he describes have a pluralistic approach to medicine. Disease may have more than one kind of cause, and so more than one kind of cure could be sought. For Allatios, religious healing still had a prominent role to play in the panoply of cures on offer and in his letter to Zacchias, he is trying to readdress the balance between medical and religious healing.

The Neoplatonic outlook of Allatios

While Allatios' emphasis on unction accords with his ecumenical standpoint, it is out of step with certain trends in medical circles. In spite of his medical training Allatios' perspectives do not suggest a movement towards a predominantly naturalistic conception of disease and its cure. On the other hand, his acceptance of the popular position on religious healing should not be taken to imply an unsophisticated view of the world, nor that he was totally divorced from the scientific thinking of his age. Many theories about the workings of the world jostled for position. In the seventeenth century newer theories, such as that of Descartes which posited a mechanistic view of nature, vied with older Neoplatonic conceptions where the world was understood to be connected by chains of correspondences to the

⁴⁵ Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, lib iii, tit 1, q. 5, p. 229 ff.

⁴⁶ Gentilcore, *Healers*, p. 24.

ultimate power, God. In the *De opinationibus*, Allatios' understanding is most clearly revealed in the final third of the work. The section begins with a description of the *stoicheion*, an elemental spirit which inhabits wells and fields, and continues with an exposition of disparate popular beliefs with apparently no connecting theme. A close scrutiny of Allatios' discussion of the *stoicheion*, and the models of interaction with the world this provides, will reveal not only the unifying theme of the section, but will also shed light on Allatios' understanding of the world and the relationship that exists between his religious and scientific thought. As the analysis of Allatios' scientific understanding presented in this text will rest upon his perception of the *stoicheion*, a detailed examination of the complicated ideas surrounding it is required.

The *stoicheion*

Allatios opens the section with a description of the *stoicheion* as he knows it in the seventeenth century. It is a kind of spirit '*which is often seen, [and] not in only one form in the domestic hearths, cellars, fields and wells, very often at night, rarely during the day. It appears sometimes as a serpent, lizard or some other reptile,⁴⁷ sometimes as a mannikin, most often of a very black hue.*'⁴⁸ The *stoicheion* of the house is closely connected both to the place, and to the inhabitants. If these creatures are harmed they in turn bring harm to the household: the head of the household, or relatives of the family die, and domestic objects go missing. In order to prevent these things people regard the spirits with great respect.

Allatios also provides an example of the kind of *stoicheion* which lives in wells. This spirit has the appearance of a small Ethiopian man, who '*molests no one, says nothing, calling women towards him with a nod and a gesture. If they approach he welcomes them kindly, and they say that he rewards them with many of his own things. If they do not approach, he does not care, nor is unkind towards them.*'⁴⁹ Such a character was supposed to live in a well in Chios town, and disturbed the

⁴⁷ See Allatios, *de opin.*, ch. XXII, p. 167

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, ch. XXII p. 166.

neighbourhood in the middle of the night by running up and down the street on his horse, which also lived in the well.

This conception of the *stoicheion* was widespread in early modern Greece. Travellers report that serpents when found inside houses were treated carefully, even reverently, on account of the good fortune they brought to the inhabitants.⁵⁰ The natural world was also inhabited by these creatures; springs and wells in particular provided frequent sightings.⁵¹ Not all spirits were benign, however. Although Allatios argues that they were not worshipped, the English consul Rycaut records the sacrifice to the spirit of place when a new house was being built. He writes of workmen burning the blood of a sheep or cock under the first stone of the foundations, in order to bring good fortune to the threshold.⁵² This behaviour rests on the idea that the spirit of the place requires a sacrifice to reconcile it to its loss of land and to gain its favour to prevent future hostile relations.⁵³

Even though Allatios does not mention these sacrifices, they are consistent with his main point that a connection exists between the spirit and the fortune of the members of the house. The behaviour of the *stoicheion* does not only reflect its treatment at the hands of the inhabitants, but it can also reveal the fate of individuals in the house. In an age before rapid communications it was extremely difficult to get information about members of the family who had travelled abroad. The *stoicheion* could help fill this need. Allatios recites his mother's experience of the phenomenon:

'Fifteen days before I arrived on Chios, my mother was in a cupboard, looking for something or other that was in there. As soon as she opened [the door], she saw the snake curled up in the middle, resting. She shut the door and told her neighbours. An old woman, one of those out of whom the Sybilline oracles poured, replied, "In a short time the master

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ James T. Bent, *The Cyclades, or Life among the Insular Greeks*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1885, p. 115.

⁵¹ Broughton (Baron Hobhouse), *Journey*, vol. 2, p. 529.

⁵² Rycaut, *Churches*, p. 371-2. See also Stewart, *Demons*, p. 103.

⁵³ Stewart, *Demons*, p. 103. He also provides examples of these *exotika* in modern day Greece. There are reports of *stoicheia* taking the shadow of someone connected to building work, particularly of wells, which causes the afflicted to waste away. See Lawson, *Folklore*, pp. 255-291 and Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 247.

*of the house will arrive.” Neither my mother nor the old woman nor anyone else was in a position to know about my journey, since I undertook it unexpectedly, and even had I wished to send back more certain information concerning my departure, I would not have been able to. Now, within the days foretold by the old woman, I arrived home.*⁵⁴

The connection between the *stoicheion* and members of the household works at a distance and can inform the family of the fate of individuals. If spirits disguised as natural creatures have the ability to transmit such messages, it is important to pay attention to natural phenomena. As Allatios points out, since it is impossible to tell whether an animal is merely the mortal variety or a *stoicheion*, it is important to attend to all with diligence and respect.⁵⁵

He moves on to relate these house spirits to another definition of *stoicheion*. ‘*There are other demons whom someone may call quite aptly gods born in individual elements [στοιχεῖα], some visible, others invisible, in ether, fire, air, and water to such an extent that there is nothing in this universe which lacks a soul nor does it lack the natural life of the higher animals.*’⁵⁶ These were called *stoicheia* or *elementa* because they were spirits which were born in the elements. Each element is vivified by such a spirit which derives its name from the association with the elements or *stoicheia*. The spirits of other material objects are also called *stoicheia* by analogy. Hence Allatios’ spirits of the fields, wells or houses get their name in this way.

However, *stoicheion* and its derivatives have a much wider range of uses than ‘spirit of place’: ‘*Not only demons themselves are called stoicheia (elemental spirits) but also things produced by magicians by the force of the magic arts, whereby inanimate things govern the fortune or life of some man or other.*’⁵⁷ The fate of an individual or place could be bound to specific material objects: Simeon of Bulgaria ‘*whose fate was linked to the statue [ἑστοιχειώσθαι] perished*’ when his statue was

⁵⁴ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXII, p. 267.

⁵⁵ Ibid, ch. XXI, p. 163.

⁵⁶ Albinus, *The Handbook of Platonism: Alcinous*, translated with an introduction and commentary by John Dillon, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, ch. 15, p. 25, lines 15-21. Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXI p. 163.

decapitated. Indeed the emperor discovered through careful enquiry that 'at the very hour when the head of the statue had been cut off, Simeon died in Bulgaria through a sickness of the heart...'.⁵⁸ Simeon's fortune was governed by the statue.

It was not only the fate of human beings which could be controlled in this way. Apollonius of Tyana, the second century Pythagorean philosopher, was able to make use of the connections between objects to control the natural world:

*'When Claudius was emperor, there was a Pythagorean philosopher, Apollonius, a Tyanean by birth, who performed wonders through magical figures [ἑτοιχειωματικὸς]. For, when he arrived in Byzantium he was asked by the inhabitants to bring about through magic arts, that neither serpents nor scorpions would strike, that midges would not appear, nor horses go wild, and that that they would not savage each other, or any other creature. He also controlled [ἑτοιχείωσεν] the River Lycus, lest it harmed Byzantium by its floods.'*⁵⁹

The objects with which Apollonius controlled the animals and rivers could also be called *stoicheion*. In the *Paschal Chronicle*, these actions of Apollonius were described by the word *telesmata*.⁶⁰ Allatios equates these with *stoicheia* which are explained as 'supernatural things [produced] by magical force and incantation'.⁶¹ A *stoicheion* therefore was not only an element or a demon which inhabited material objects, but also an object which has been magicked so that it can control human beings, animals or natural forces.

Allatios provides no clue as to how these two uses of *stoicheion* relate to each other. It is peculiar that there should be no connection, given Allatios' desire to show that in such matters as these, things remain constant throughout the ages.⁶² Therefore we

⁵⁷ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXI, p. 163.

⁵⁸ Ibid, ch. XXI, p. 163. Georgios Kedrenos, *Georgius Cedrenus Opera*. Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae, Immanuel Bekker (ed.), Bonn: E. Weber, 1838-1839, vol. 2, p. 308 lines 1-8.

⁵⁹ Ibid, vol 1. p. 346 lines 18-22, p. 347 lines 1-2. Compare p. 431, lines 14-18. Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXI, p. 163.

⁶⁰ *Chronicon Paschale*, Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae, Ludovicus Dindorfius (ed.), [With the Latin translation and commentary by C. Du Fresne, Seigneur du Cange.], 2 vols., Bonn: E. Weber, 1832, vol 1: 93, p. 467.

⁶¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXI, pp. 164-5.

⁶² Ibid, ch. I, p. 114.

should look more closely at Allatios' explanation of the words.⁶³ He translates 'ἔστοιχειῶσθαι' as 'whose fate was linked', 'ἔστοιχείωσεν' as 'controlled'. It is clear from the passage above that he considers that this control was achieved through magical means, for Apollonius of Tyana was 'στοιχειωματικός', that is, 'he performed wonders through magical figures.' This agrees with his earlier explanation of the word, as denoting magicians 'who make similar things with particular signs and incantations.'⁶⁴

What then is the magician doing? Allatios does not explain. Fortunately, we can turn to the formulae of modern historians interested in this practice to shed some light on the issue. In particular, Greenfield's discussion is helpful for understanding the link between the different usages. The magician's action is denoted by the verb 'stoicheioun' and for Greenfield, in his discussion on Byzantine demons, this involves 'primarily the notion of fixing the powers believed to lie behind, in or under the astral bodies (or stoicheia) into an object such as a statue or amulet through which the practitioner hopes to perform his magic, (a process which will certainly have involved the use of power names and signs)'.⁶⁵ The magician is drawing down spirits from the planets into matter. Through this process, man made objects are then filled with spirit, like the objects of the natural world in which the *stoicheia* dwell.

This requires an astrological connection which does not seem to be present in Allatios' work. However, on closer inspection, the excerpt from the *Testament of Solomon* provides the missing link. The author, assuming the persona of Solomon, writes, 'I ordered that the demon be brought into my presence. And the assembled

⁶³ For Allatios, because of the relationship he sees between the meaning of the word and its etymology, 'elemental spirit' is the original meaning for the word 'stoicheion', used to refer to an object acted upon by a magician so that it can control the life of an animate being, is a secondary usage, and the other connected words are derived from this. In this he differs from Blum for whom the original meaning of the word seems to have been that of a magical sign. He then sees the meaning developing to encompass a demon bound by the magical signs, and the talisman by means of which such a demon exercised its influence. Finally, it came to stand for an elemental demon. See Claes Blum, 'The Meaning of στοιχεῖον and its Derivatives in the Byzantine Age: A Study in Byzantine Magic', *Eranos* 44 (1946), 325.

⁶⁴ Ibid, ch. XXI, p. 164.

⁶⁵ Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 194.

*spirits with handsome features entered together. I myself, Solomon, was amazed and I asked, "Who are you?" and they all replied together with one voice, "We are those who they call elements [elementa (Latin) στοιχεῖα (Greek)], Lords of the world of shadows; Self-deception, Discord etc."*⁶⁶ In this extract 'stoicheion' refers neither to an elemental spirit nor a talisman created by a magus but denotes a 'celestial body' or a 'planet', a meaning it had developed in New Testament times.⁶⁷ Although this meaning is not clear from Allatios' translation, it is difficult to see how he could have been ignorant of the astrological implications of 'stoicheion'. The combination of demonology and astrology is a characteristic of the *Testament of Solomon*. It is made clear in this work that demons reside in the stars or constellations, taking their name from their relationship to the planets.⁶⁸ In fact, following the recitations of the names of the *stoicheia* in the passage above, the text continues 'our stars in heaven look small'. A later chapter also directly places the *stoicheia* within the context of the decans of the zodiac. There were thirty-six decans or deities, each of whom ruled over 10° of the 360° of the universe.⁶⁹

Allatios' translation of 'stoicheion' by 'elementum' obscures the connection with the stars but this illustrates not Allatios' ignorance of the astrological association but the difficulties inherent in translating 'stoicheion'. Latin does not have a term which covers all the uses of 'stoicheion' and Allatios has to choose between bringing out the connection with the stars and stressing the continuity of the term 'stoicheion' over these different usages. Since his overall method depends upon establishing constancy of 'customs, morals, virtues, vices and enthusiasms', he chooses to emphasise the continuity of the term through the use of the word 'elementum' in his

⁶⁶ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXI, p. 163. For the full text see McCown, *Testament*, 8:1-4, p. 31-32, although Allatios' text is not identical with any of the manuscripts examined by McCown. An English translation based on the eclectic text of McCown can be found in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols., London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1983. Vol. 1: 'Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments', 8: 1-4, p. 969-970. A version of the Testament of Solomon is also to be found J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, Paris: Petit-Montrouge, vol. 122, 1864, cols 1315-58. McCown argues however that the text used here is inaccurate.

⁶⁷ Greenfield, *Demonology*, p. 191. Galatians 4:3; 4: 9; II Peter 3: 10 and 12.

⁶⁸ See H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940, sv 'stoicheion'.

Latin translation.⁷⁰ This translation works admirably in the second example of the *stoicheion*, where he is talking about the presence of demons within elements, but obscures the connection in this first example from the *Testament of Solomon* and thus the point of this quotation is almost lost. In spite of the obscurity caused by these problems in translation, Allatios does provide a text which links the *stoicheion* to the stars.

Furthermore, Allatios was most definitely aware of the theory of Neoplatonic powers deriving from the stars. Even though the connection between the spirits and planets may have been lost from Byzantine popular culture, it was still very much alive in western astrology, where God was believed to infuse the non-personal spirit of the planets with power, which in turn affected human life. Allatios had gone through a medical training and medicine and astronomy (or astrology for the two were not distinguished at this period) remained closely linked in the early seventeenth century despite the beginning of changes. Different parts of the body were influenced by different signs of the zodiac and it was important to plot the course of the stars to determine appropriate or beneficial times for medical treatment.⁷¹ In more extreme cases the doctor diagnosed the disease and prescribed treatment just by casting horoscopes.⁷² Many of the leading astronomers had started life as doctors, Kepler and Copernicus to name just two.⁷³ Conversely many doctors had a close interest in the stars. Lagalla, who taught Allatios medicine, had written a treatise on the telescope.⁷⁴

Allatios' own interest in astrology is evident in the fact that he produced the first Latin translation of *Ptolemy's Quadripartite*, an astrological text which deals with

⁶⁹ Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, p. 952. For links of the demons with stars see 2:2; 8:2. 18:2.

⁷⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 114.

⁷¹ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England*, London: Penguin Books, 1991, p. 340.

⁷² Miller, 'Astrological Diagnosis', pp 27-33.

⁷³ Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 5.

⁷⁴ Iulio Cesare Lagalla, *De phaenomenis in orbe lunae novi telescopii usu a Gallileo Gallileo nunc iterum suscitatis physica disputatio*, Venice by Thomas Balionus, 1612.

telesmata and their production.⁷⁵ This work was the attempt of the second-century author, Claudius Ptolemy, to provide a scientific basis for astrology. The work would have made the astrological meaning of *telesmata* clear to Allatios. It was Allatios' text that was used in 1701 as the basis for the translation of the book into English. Interestingly, once again both the translator and his addressees were doctors. The translator, a certain John Whalley, specially selected Allatios' text because of its quality. He writes that this was because Allatios was

*'promoted to be Library keeper to the vatican'⁷⁶ at Rome; where at that time, the choicest books that gold, silver, favour or interest could procure, were (as they still are), so that the premises considered, it is not unreasonable in my thoughts to conclude, that a man of so Great a Learning and Parts and Opportunity, as Allatios had, and so well inclin'd to the Art, as his Labour or Translating this book (as aforesaid) bespakes him to be, would (to Gratify his Pains) chuse not the worst but the most Undoubtedly True Copy that could be procured, to make his Translation from.'*⁷⁷

Thus John Whalley, himself a *'student in Astrology and Physick'* argues that Allatios' translation demonstrates his knowledge of the subject. Other texts, including the popular *Hermetic Corpus* contained information about the creation of talismans by drawing down power from the heavenly bodies. Allatios was well aware of the astrological theories in which powers, personal or impersonal, were resident in the planets and that it was from these that the heavenly power was transmitted to the earthly souls.

Elsewhere, Allatios' translation reveals that he had a deep knowledge of the practices underlying the creation of the *stoicheion*. Where there is no possible comparable term in Latin, Allatios is forced to provide a paraphrase. He translates *ἐστοιχειῶσθαι* as *'whose fate was linked'*, *ἐστοιχειῶσεν* as *'controlled'*.⁷⁸ The correct translation of these terms required a great deal of background knowledge and

⁷⁵ Leo Allatios (ed. and trans.), *Procli Diadochi Paraphrasis in Ptolemaei Libros IV*, Lugd. Batavorum, ex Officina Elzeviriana, 1635.

⁷⁶ The small letter given to 'vatican' perhaps arises from the non-catholic affiliations of the author.

⁷⁷ Ptolemy, *Ptolemy's Quadripartite; or, Four Books concerning the Influences of the Stars*, translated by John Whalley, London, printed for John Sprint, 1701, Preface.

⁷⁸ These words are difficult to translate and modern writers have debated their precise meaning. Allatios' interpretation in fact corresponds to that of modern scholars such as Blum and Greenfield. See Blum *στοιχείον*, 323-4; Greenfield, *Demonology*, pp. 193-4.

understanding of the practices. This is most clearly illustrated, not in the case of *stoicheion*, but of *telesma*, a word which denotes similar talismanic practices. When Allatios' translation of a passage of the Pascal Chronicle is compared to that of the Jesuit scholar Matthew Raderus, the importance of background knowledge to an accurate translation is made manifest. When faced with the Greek 'καὶ ποιῶν τελέσματα εἰς τὰς πόλεις καὶ χώρας' Raderus rendered it 'in urbibus et regionibus vestigalia instituit' i.e. 'he introduced taxes in the towns and provinces'. Again he translates 'ἐποίησε τελέσματα πολλὰ τὸ τῶν χελώνων, καὶ τὸ τοῦ λύκου ποταμοῦ κατὰ μέσον τῆς πόλεως' as 'ibique portoriorum ex ostreorum piscatione, lyco flumine, quod mediam secat avitatem, et equorum aliarumque rerum proventu accipiendorum auctor fuit'⁷⁹ i.e. 'and there the author received dues from oyster fishing, from the River Lycus, which runs through the town and from the rearing of horses and other things.' Raderus is taking the meaning of 'τέλεσμα' from the ancient Greek, where it means 'money paid' and from the verb 'τελέω': 'pay tax'. Allatios' translation therefore reveals the depth of knowledge on the subject, which he emphasises by drawing attention to Raderus' faulty translation.⁸⁰

Therefore, even though Allatios does not state the association explicitly, this suggests he was well aware of the connection between the different uses of *stoicheion*. *Stoicheia* are the powers present in the stars which emanate downwards and vivify every living creature. These powers were called down into objects, also called *stoicheion*, through magical rites. In the same way that Allatios' spirit of place is connected by analogy to the elemental spirits, so too are the 'magical *stoicheion*' created by the magus. In his text, Allatios therefore passes from the disseminators of power, the powerful astral spirits, to an animated world, and then to man-made spirits. Without the first quotation from the *Testament of Solomon*, the link between the other two would be lost. It is the passage from the *Testament of Solomon* that connects the concept of elemental spirits to the magical *stoicheion*, i.e., man made

⁷⁹ *Chronicon Alexandrinum idemque astronomicum et ecclesiasticum, vulgo Siculum, seu Fasti Siculi* ... [Attributed to George of Pisidia.] Graecè, cum Latina interpretatione vulgatum opera & studio Matthaei Raderi, Monachii, ex formis A. Bergiae, 1615, p. 590-591.

⁸⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXV, p. 165.

objects, which have had a demon artificially introduced by magical means. Again, if this quotation had been omitted, the Neoplatonic scheme of the distribution of power would be incomplete. This short quotation, which at first sight seems out of place when compared with the extensive examples of spirits of place or magical *stoicheia*, is central to the whole of the final section.

Neoplatonism in the West

Although the terms '*stoicheion*' and '*telesma*' may not have been well-known, the Neoplatonic system which underpinned them was familiar to western scholars. Once Allatios had explained the meaning of *stoicheion*, he did not need to draw out the connection between the different uses explicitly, for to those versed in astrology and a Neoplatonic world view which posited a hierarchical chain of being where the life force was passed from the highest to the lowest, the association between *stoicheia* and the planets was self-evident. Renaissance Neoplatonism held that man inhabited a living universe. Everything in it possessed a spirit. Earth and heaven were linked together in a hierarchical chain of being, from the highest to lowest. This was heavily influenced by the work of the Renaissance philosopher Marsilio Ficino who provided translations of the most important Neoplatonic works. His edition of the *Corpus Hermeticum* was published in 1463, the writings of Porphyry and Proclus in 1498, and the *Peri Daimonon* of Michael Psellos in 1497.⁸¹ These works were very important for the development of western Neoplatonism and helped Ficino shape his new synthesis of Neoplatonism and Christianity.⁸² He gave a much greater value to these non-Christian works than to those of the early Church Fathers. In fact, he saw Neoplatonic doctrine as divinely inspired and believed that its revival was necessary for the survival and prosperity of Christianity.⁸³ Renaissance Neoplatonism, fed by these streams of thought, gave Christianity and certain pagan philosophers a common ground. There is evidence to suggest that Allatios himself understood the world in

⁸¹ Ernst Cassirer, Paul Oscar Kristeller et al. (ed.), *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, London, 1946, p. 186-7.

⁸² Francis Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964, p. 17.

terms of this Neoplatonic system. Alongside his translation of Ptolemy he produced a translation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*.⁸⁴ This work systematises and provides a summary of Neoplatonic metaphysics, touching on issues such as souls and planetary influence.

This understanding of the world fed into streams of both demonic and natural magic. In demonic magic, demons replaced the impersonal planetary spirits and could be attracted into objects or compelled to accomplish tasks. Natural magic, where the spirits remained impersonal, also produced effects on inanimate objects, or directly on the body.⁸⁵ By the seventeenth century many natural magicians, such as John Baptista Della Porta, rejected the action of demons as a cause of events.⁸⁶ They believed that to posit a demonic cause for events was not merely heretical, it was a totally mistaken way of understanding the world. However, these natural magicians retained an understanding of the world in terms of chains of spiritual correspondences and believed that the correspondence between higher and lower orders could be discovered and would be of use to human beings. Della Porta stated that the herb rue was an 'enemy' of hemlock. Although rue caused ulcers if touched, the juice of hemlock soothed it. Extrapolating from this he argued the converse: that rue was an antidote against hemlock poisoning.⁸⁷ Allatios' example from Psellos of how to prevent plant disease and infestation of the crops seems to suggest the same principal. Psellos states '*I myself know opposing properties⁸⁸ which are endowed with virtue and power against animal damage and, equally, the poison most effective against locusts and rust and of others which lay waste to the vines and devour the*

⁸³ Cassirer, *Renaissance Philosophy*, pp. 186-7.

⁸⁴ Allatios, *Procli Diadochi*.

⁸⁵ Daniel Pickering Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella*, London: University of London Press, 1958, p. 76.

⁸⁶ William Eamon, *Science and the Secrets of Nature: Books of Secrets in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994, p. 196.

⁸⁷ Eamon, *Secrets*, 1994, p. 213.

⁸⁸ This approach can also be seen in the Galenic theory of opposites, which was frequently resorted to in western medicine of the early modern period.

*corn.*⁸⁹ However, Psellos does not explain the exact correspondence between the rite he proposes with the dead viper and its apotropaic effect.

These correspondences were hidden and difficult to find. Sometimes they could be discovered by observing the external features of objects and considering characteristics such as by colour, resemblance and taste etc., but this method was not always reliable. Since they could not be discovered by coercion of demons under Della Porta's scheme, the only sure way to discover correspondences was through empirical research. Thus this way of looking at the world had a bearing on the number of works produced on the 'secrets of nature' in the seventeenth century.⁹⁰ The rhetoric of 'secrets of nature' encouraged research and experimentation into hidden causes. It was only by these processes that information about the workings of the world could be known. The action of the magnet was the paradigmatic 'secret of nature' where the special quality of the stone was not apparent to the onlooker. It was only under certain circumstances, when the magnet was placed close to a piece of iron that these special qualities were revealed. The other new sciences, such as metallurgy and chemistry, which at the outset were very close to alchemy, fell under the same classification. This way of looking at the world therefore had an influence on the scientific developments of the seventeenth century.

Although the extent to which the new discoveries and developments of the period rest upon such a world view is hotly debated, it is clear that the most prominent scientists of the age did not reject it.⁹¹ Galileo Galilei, for example was attracted to join the *Accademia dei Lincei*, set up by Federico Cesi and guided by Della Porta, in order to investigate the secrets of nature.⁹² Moreover, anxious to win the patronage of Duke Cosimo II de Medici, he spoke of the many secrets he had in his possession - he was well aware of the parameters and popularity of the genre. Newton too was

⁸⁹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXIX, p. 178.

⁹⁰ Eamon, *Secrets*, pp. 207-8.

⁹¹ On this debate compare for example the viewpoints of Francis Yates, *Giordano Bruno* and Robert S. Westman and J. E. McGuire *Hermeticism and the Scientific Revolution*, University of California: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1977.

⁹² Eamon, *Secrets*, p. 231.

touched by this outlook. Whether or not his own research was influenced by the methods and practices associated with these genres, Newton too was deeply interested in alchemy, and wrote many tracts on the subject. Moreover, situated in the circle of the Cambridge Neoplatonists, it is not surprising that his scientific thought was influenced by their philosophy.⁹³ Even his theory of gravitational action was conceived of in Neoplatonic terms.⁹⁴ Therefore, in his text *De opinationibus* Allatios did not need to provide an explicit explanation of the relationship between the planets and the elemental spirits. The system would have been obvious to the reader familiar with these astrological and Neoplatonic ideas.

Allatios himself was greatly interested in the secrets of natural or '*arcana naturae*' as he termed them. Like many others of his time, Allatios was moved to write a treatise on the actions of the magnet. Unfortunately it was never published.⁹⁵ This interest is also apparent from a letter he wrote to the philosopher Licetus Fortunius (1577-1657). There he describes his experience with a luminescent stone. His observation of the stone is carefully described. He states that its peculiar properties could not possibly be known by looking at its dull grey exterior and, in fact, they could not even be observed in daylight, which added to the occult nature of the phenomenon. However, by careful observation Allatios discovers that the light of the stone is only visible in the dark, and only when a light had shone on it shortly before.⁹⁶ The luminescent quality of the stone, like the attraction of a load stone for a piece of iron, is not immediately observable. The stone must be placed in particular circumstances before these hidden qualities are revealed.

Allatios' emphasis on experiment and observation is also revealed in the *De opinationibus*. From the very start he emphasises the importance of careful

⁹³ McGuire, 'Neoplatonism and Active Principles: Newton and the Corpus Hermeticum' in *Hermeticism and the Scientific Revolution*, University of California: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1977, p. 95.

⁹⁴ J. E. McGuire, 'Neoplatonism', p. 131; 104.

⁹⁵ This work, written in 1628 is held in the Vallicelliana library in Italy catalogued as Vallic. All. LXXVII.1.

⁹⁶ Leo Allatios 'De lapide in tenebris emisante' in Fortunio Liceti, *De quaesitis per epistolas a claris viris responsa*, 3 vols., Bononiae, typis Nicolai Tebaldini, 1640-1648, vol. I, p. 40.

investigation as opposed to working through intuition.⁹⁷ Throughout the rest of the text there is a stress on the importance of experience, investigation and observation. This should not be seen only as an antiquarian point of method, but a scientific one too. The fact that Allatios' research in this instance is largely limited to the archives does not conflict with his statement. Texts too were believed to demonstrate facts, which would at a later date be demonstrated in nature itself.⁹⁸ The subject matter of the *De opinationibus* was also a suitable one for this kind of research. 'Secrets of nature' could include a wide range of bizarre and curious happenings. There were secrets of every branch of knowledge, including the different customs and practices of people abroad and they were often also associated with tales of bizarre happenings and prodigies of exotic beasts and far-off lands. The *De opinationibus*, with its description of walking corpses, child stealing demons, and miraculous happenings, fits into such a category.⁹⁹

Neoplatonism and the *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinationibus*

In the final section of the *De opinationibus*, the structure of the text is informed by the Neoplatonic connections established in chapter XXI. Although Allatios does not discuss *stoicheia* as such in the rest of his text, the later chapters follow the model of interaction between humankind and the world which the earlier chapter lays down: the fate of human beings can be controlled by inanimate objects or animals, and humankind can affect and control the natural world, not just through practical actions but through words and deeds which act on the correspondences existing between men and objects. For example, in chapter XXII Allatios relates that if a hen crows it is taken as a dire omen for the whole family. In order to avert the omen the hen must be beheaded on the threshold: *'They affirm that they have taken care of that impending misfortune, if he entirely severs the neck with one blow. If he does not accomplish this with a single stroke but the axe is left sticking in the body or in some other of its parts, the calamity has not been averted, but worse is expected: so much*

⁹⁷ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. I, p. 114.

⁹⁸ Eamon, *Secrets*, p. 206; 216.

force is believed to reside in the neck of the crowing hen.’¹⁰⁰ In the same way that decapitating the statue (*stoicheion*) controlled the fate of Simeon the Bulgarian, the beheading of the chicken controls the fate of the family. In the first case, however, the decapitation had fatal consequences for Simeon, in the second it was necessary to ward off evil fortune from the household.

Similarly, actions working on such correspondences can be used to remove insects from the garden. Just as Apollonius of Tyana manages to control (*stoikeiomaticos*) scorpions and midges, both the philosopher Michael Psellos and the church *Euchologion* provide methods by which insects can be removed from the fields. Psellos provides an arcane way of removing caterpillars from the crops:

‘You have heard perhaps of the hydra, a celestial sign. Let it not escape your notice when it is rising. When you see its light, [you should] immediately hunt the viper. It is an animal and not difficult to hunt, well known to everyone by its markings. Put it on its back and cut it from chin to tail. Then, hanging it from a fine thread, secretly fortify [the place], as it were, tracing something like a circle in the fields. The rust in the plants hence deprived of strength, the locust will not land on them, nor will the caterpillar be laid in the flowers.’¹⁰¹

Christian practices too showed how mankind could act on the world using particular words and actions. The *Exorcism of St Tryphon*, a rite accepted by the Orthodox Church, was used to expel pests from the garden. The priests sprinkle the ground with water blessed at Epiphany and then, leaving the garden, go into the country side. The insects follow them and so are removed from the crops.¹⁰²

Again, because of the link which existed between the natural world and human beings, events could be interpreted and provided information about the fate of individuals. Allatios’ mother tells her next door neighbour of the presence of the

⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 279.

¹⁰⁰ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXVII, p. 175; Cerbu, *Leone Allacci*, p. 121, n. 64 sees the *De opin.*, as belonging to this genre, but misunderstands the essence of such treatises because he sees their attempts to demystify the world in a twentieth century sense. Thus he fails to understand how Allatios can believe in the *stoicheion* and miraculous healing, although such phenomena are not rejected by such authors.

¹⁰¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXIX, p. 179.

¹⁰² Ibid, ch XXIX, p. 179; See also ‘Exorcism of St Tryphon’, in *Εὐχολόγιον τὸ Μέγα*, Venice: Ὁ Φοῖνιξ, 1877, p. 500-503.

snake (*stoicheion*) in her cupboard, and she interprets it as a sign that Allatios would soon return to Chios.¹⁰³ In a Christian context, the movement of the lamps above the patriarchal throne indicated the fate of the patriarch: ‘*When the hymns were sung they flickered, and anyone who saw them had proof of the ejection of the current patriarch.*’¹⁰⁴ In both cases natural phenomena conveyed a message to the onlookers.

Therefore, throughout the final section of the work, even though the word ‘*stoicheion*’ and its derivatives are not used in the examples, the underlying concepts they embody are elaborated in examples from the later Byzantine period and Allatios’ own life. The concepts which Allatios introduced in the context of the *stoicheion* bind together the disparate beliefs presented in this part of *De opinionibus* into a coherent system, a system resting upon a Neoplatonic conception of the world.

This system embraces official Christian beliefs and customs as well as popular ones and allows Allatios to endorse the latter. He describes the actions of those who wished to know whether a relative or a friend travelling abroad was still alive. First they offered up prayers and then they lit a torch, candle or lamp in the open air or in front of a icon. If the absent friend was alive, the light did not go out, whatever the weather. If he was dead, the candle would be extinguished, even if there was no wind. Further, some claimed they could tell how his life fared by the colour of the candle flame. Allatios goes on to verify the practice. He had received an icon of the Virgin Mary from ‘*an intelligent and wise man.*’ On the icon the Virgin Mary was

*‘depicted with so great a veneration that it possessed among many other qualities the following quite extraordinary [one]: if anyone, concerned about the life of another, whoever he may be, lit a candle before her, it is discovered without question from the light of that candle, whether he is still among the living. Indeed, if he lives, whatever kind of tempest rages, that light is not extinguished. If his life has departed, the light is extinguished.’*¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXII, p. 167.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, ch. XXIII, p. 169; George Pachymeres, *De Michaelae*, vol. 2, 2:15, p. 146.

¹⁰⁵ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXIII, p. 168.

Allatios also relates his own experience with the *stoicheion*. Just as his mother had been informed of his visit by the presence of the snake, so Allatios' own return to Rome was foretold in this fashion:

*'Eight months later, woken from sleep in the middle of the night, I felt something or other under the very pillow on which I was resting my head, snoring. Stretching out my hand I seemed to lay hold of a snake, which fled away immediately at my touch. First thing in the morning, I told the neighbours what I had touched in the night. That same old woman, turned to me, and smiling said, "Soon, on this account, you will have to travel from this place to another." Indeed this prophecy then came to pass, although I myself neither thought about going away, nor was there any reason why I should prepare myself for a journey. Not twenty days had passed and the question came up and a journey to Rome was decided upon.'*¹⁰⁶

For once Allatios does not scoff at popular beliefs. His experience although identified as '*popular opinion*' gives credence to the belief. Therefore, the Neoplatonic concepts underlying '*stoicheion*', describe a way of relating to the world which underpins both popular understandings and official Christianity. Both the above examples reveal the assumption that the world is responsive and can be acted upon through appropriate words and deeds.

This Neoplatonic understanding allows Allatios to bring together different outlooks on the world into one framework. In the example above, he brings together popular beliefs with Christianity. He also identifies popular demons with the Neoplatonic spirits of place. We have already seen how he uses the language of the Neoplatonist Albinus to explain the *stoicheion* of seventeenth-century Greece.¹⁰⁷ He also understands the *nereides* in this way. In chapter 20 he argues that Psellos confused the opinions of the common people with sicknesses. He accuses the latter of understanding afflictions such as indigestion (*varychnas*) and nightmares (*ephialtes*) in the same way as popular spirits of *kallikantzaroï*, *vrikolakes*, and the *nereides*. Allatios argues that the latter should not be explained in terms of sickness but rather as spirits of place. They appear not to those in bed, but to people walking in the

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, ch. XXII, pp. 167-168.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, ch. XXI, p. 163.

fields and roads. Having dismissed Psellos' conception, he finally finds something redeemable in his argument:

*'At last, however, from his Dialogue on the Operation of Demons he said of the same: 'Those [demons] who live in damp places and are accustomed to a better way of life, turn themselves into birds and women. It may be that the Greeks call these nyads, nereids and dryads in the feminine gender.'*¹⁰⁸

The *nereides* are spirits who live in damp places. It is this quotation which he refers to in chapter XXII where he brings together different examples of demons of place. For Allatios, the *nereides*, the *stoicheion*, and to a certain extent the *kallikantzaroi* - the goblin-like creatures who live in wild and isolated places - are really examples of these elemental spirits who have been personalised and brought into the popular tradition.

Moreover, Allatios sees in this living universe a factor which brings together not only popular and official Christianity and learned Neoplatonic ideas, but Graeco-Roman pagan beliefs too. This is clear from his discussion of water demons. Following his account of the *stoicheion* which lived in a well in Chios he reports that *'it is not astonishing that such spirits are spied most frequently in the well, and in the fountains or other places, in stagnant water or mud, for, as Tertullian testifies in his book 'De Baptismo' "Unclean spirits lurk in water"'*.¹⁰⁹ This gives credence to the popular belief that spirits live in wells, and sees it as consistent with the official Christian beliefs of Tertullian. These beliefs are also consistent with those of the pagans. Allatios compares Tertullian's discussion with that of demons inhabiting water in stories of the lives of Porphyry and Iamblichos. Porphyry ejects the demon Kaustham from the baths, whereas Iamblichos summons the demons from the stream in the shape of a boy. Iamblichos told his disciples *"this spring is called Erote, and the name of the one next to it is Anterote."* He at once touched the water with his hand - he happened to be sitting on the ledge of the spring where the overflow runs

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, ch. XX, p. 162; Paul Gautier (ed.), 'Le De Daemonibus du Pseudo-Psellos', *Revue des Études Byzantines* 38 (1980), 169-170

¹⁰⁹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXIII, p. 167; Tertullian, *Tertullian's Hoomily on Baptism*, edited with an introduction and translation by Ernest Evans, London: SPCK, 1964, Greek, pp. 12-14, English, pp. 13-15.

off - and uttering a brief summons he called forth a boy from the depth of the spring.' His disciples persuaded him to go on to the next spring where 'he went through the same performance there also, and summoned another Eröte like the first in all respects, except that his hair was darker and fell loose in the sun'.¹¹⁰ Christian works, namely the *Life* of Gregory the Wonderworker and the *De Daemonibus* of Michael Psellos illustrate the same point: that there are spirits dwelling in the natural world.¹¹¹

It is significant that all these authors were influenced by Neoplatonism. Eunapios, the author of the *Lives* of Porphyry and Iamblichos, was a fourth-century Neoplatonic philosopher, highly hostile to Christianity. His *Lives* of Porphyry and Iamblichos form part of a series of biographies of fourth-century Neoplatonists which he wrote to compete with Christian saints' lives of the period. Porphyry himself was the author of the *Life* of the philosopher Plotinus and was also his disciple, editing his works which later became central to the Renaissance Neoplatonic project. Iamblichos was well known during the Renaissance for his own writings and for his preservation of the *Hermetic Corpus*. Neoplatonic theory was brought into Christian theology through the work of a number of the early church fathers, including Gregory of Nyssa, who produced a synthesis of Christianity and Plotinian mysticism. Michael Psellos, the Byzantine historian and rhetorician, was also known for his Neoplatonic outlook, essentially following the Neoplatonism of Proclus.¹¹² Doubt is now cast on his authorship of the *De Daemonibus*, a judgement which Allatios

¹¹⁰ Allatios refers to this episode but does not quote from it. See Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXIII, p. 167. For the full text see W. C. Wright (ed.), *The Lives of the Sophists: Philostratus and Eunapius*, London: Heinemann, 1952, p. 369. See also pp. 369-370.

¹¹¹ Paul Gautier (ed.), '*De Daemonibus*', 169-170; Gregory of Nyssa 'On the Life and Wonders of Our Father among the Saints, Gregory the Wonderworker', in Michael Slusser (ed.), *St Gregory Thaumaturgus: Life and Works*, Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998, ch. 13, pp. 80-81. For the Greek text see Gregory of Nyssa, 'De Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi' (ed.) Gunter Heil, in Gunter Heil, Joannes P. Cavarnos, Otto Lendle (eds.), *Gregorii Nysseni Opera: Sermones*, vol X, 1, pt. II, Leiden, 1990, pp. 51-52.

¹¹² José Grosdidier de Matons, 'Psellos et le monde de l'irrationnel', *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976), 325-6.

anticipated. Nevertheless, a similar understanding of the world is displayed in the *Peri Daemonon*, a work which is still included under his authorship.¹¹³

This acceptance of Neoplatonism and the concomitant desire to present different systems as compatible also fits into western intellectual trends. During the Renaissance, the Neoplatonic *Hermetic Corpus* was believed to be extremely ancient and to provide information which had existed at the time of Moses or before the Fall of Adam, but had since been lost. It was considered to provide a divine revelation which underpinned Christianity and united it with pagan philosophy.¹¹⁴ Even after Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614), one of the greatest French classical scholars, revealed in the sixteenth century that it was actually a work of the second century AD, the belief in a perfect knowledge which would be in harmony with all sources continued.¹¹⁵

It is Allatios' world view, influenced by Neoplatonism which enables him to see a common theme in these customs and allows him to draw together seemingly different outlooks - popular, Christian and pagan - into one overall structure. It also explains how he can accept the popular belief of the *stoicheion*. It fits into his conception of an enchanted universe in which correspondences exist between human beings and objects. However, the inclusiveness of Neoplatonism also has its drawbacks. Firstly, if everything rests on the same principle, it makes it difficult to distinguish superstition from learned Neoplatonic precepts. However, he is not obliged to embrace every example which he provides just because he accepts the world view which underpins the acts. Like all Neoplatonists, he uses other criteria to separate out what he accepts and what he rejects. In spite of his Neoplatonic outlook the Byzantine philosopher Michael Psellos rejects the talismans of Iulianus Chaldeus and Apuleius Aser: '*It clearly seems to me, that what is disseminated by these men is nothing but fables and fiction.*'¹¹⁶ They do not correspond to his own experience of

¹¹³ Allatios, *De Psellis*, col. 484.

¹¹⁴ Webster, *Paracelsus*, p. 2.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 5.

¹¹⁶ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXVIII, p. 178.

the world. As with Psellos, Neoplatonism does not oblige Allatios to accept either the popular beliefs or the learned Neoplatonic ones. While retaining the underlying 'magical' view of an enchanted universe, he rejected many of the popular practices as superstition.

There is also the more serious problem that this concept of the world undermines the uniqueness of the Christian miracle. If Christian and pagan practices act on the world in the same way, how was one to distinguish the Christian miracles, supposedly supernatural events which could not be produced by nature? In what way do the flickering lights dismissing the patriarch and the miracle working icons stand out from the *stoicheion* or pagan magic? If pagan philosophers such as Apollonius of Tyana were able to affect things in the natural world through talismans and incantations which made use of these correspondences, how are Christians able to mark out their miracles as special? This was a problem faced by many at this time. This danger can be seen in the conclusions of the sixteenth-century magus, Cornelius Agrippa. He regarded Christian ceremonies and prayer in the same light as pagan ones.¹¹⁷ Both were involved in the same kind of activity. For this reason 'natural magic' was also difficult to reject altogether without undermining the basis for Christian miracles, and denying the efficacy of the appeal to saints advocated by the church.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, if seemingly miraculous events could be produced by human manipulation of nature, Christian miracles could be reduced to ordinary everyday events.¹¹⁹ This perhaps explains the concern of the Counter-Reformation Church to verify miracles by ruling out natural causes altogether.

These tensions remain in Allatios' work, as in the wider context of seventeenth-century intellectual life. However, he is always careful to distinguish Christian practices as more pious, and stress that it is God who is the cause of the event. Even in incidents which do not have a specifically Christian context, it was still acknowledged that God could work through his creation, and provide his people with

¹¹⁷ Brooke, *Science*, p. 75.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 70.

signs to interpret. This way of studying nature, looking through it to God, rather than at it, was a traditional medieval Christian way of understanding of the world. There is a much greater problem with the compatibility of the actions of Apollonius of Tyana in the creation of talismans. How could a pagan philosopher produce such marvels without access to a Christian God? Allatios provides no clue to his solution to this problem. It is perhaps significant that the only actions he specifically approves of in this sphere are Christian ones.

Allatios' understanding of the relation between the world and God required him not only to look through nature, but at it. On his journey from Chios to Messina in 1615 his ship was struck by a storm.¹²⁰ He noticed the navigator murmuring and making signs. When asked the reason for the actions he replied that he weakened the force of the deadly wave with prayers and the sign of the cross. Allatios asked whether he knew '*the deadly waves amongst so many attacking the ship*'.¹²¹ The man replied the ship will never sink unless it is the ninth wave. Allatios checked this assessment: '*It was truly amazing. He counted nine and with that wave, just as with a powerful and dangerous machine, the ship rocked so that it clearly threatened destruction...and I always experienced the saying of the old man to be true, for the ship was always at risk from the inauspicious ninth wave.*'¹²² Allatios does not only verify the man's experience of nature, but also the efficacy of his remedy, for '*making the sign of the cross, he seemed to soften the blow*'.¹²³ The practice of the old sailor meets both the criteria of Christian piety, as well as the observation of nature. For Allatios to accept popular beliefs they not only had to be compatible with Christianity, they had to be demonstrated as true through experience and observation of the world.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ Eamon, *Secrets*, p. 195.

¹²⁰ This refers to Allatios' return to Rome with the Bishop of Chios.

¹²¹ Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. XXVI, p. 175.

¹²² Ibid, ch. XXVI, p. 175.

¹²³ Ibid, ch. XXVI, p. 175.

¹²⁴ See Allatios' discussion of the approach of Zacchias and Psellos to the *gello* in the introduction above, pp. 27-28.

Allatios' discussion of healing should be placed in this context of Neoplatonic understandings of the world. It draws together religion and nature, breaking the separation between natural and supernatural cause and effect. The relationships suggested in the word *stoicheion* provide a model for interaction between mankind and the world, a model in which the distinction between natural and supernatural causes is blurred.¹²⁵ If worldly things are linked by chains of correspondences to the divine power which infuses them with life, it is difficult to divorce divine from natural causality. It is clear that Allatios did not use his investigation into the secrets of nature, popular beliefs and healing in order to disprove miracles or the authority of Christianity: his own miraculous healing experience reveals the importance he puts on the encounter with the miraculous in everyday life. Instead, he wished to establish the power that religious rites and rituals have to manipulate the world. The miraculous and the appeal to God were part of the everyday experience, both for Allatios and the people he is discussing. For Zacchias, on the other hand, the line between natural and supernatural was far more clearly drawn. Although miracles occurred they were rare, special events, distinct from both everyday experience and from nature itself. For Allatios, the problematic relationship between human manipulation of the world in Neoplatonic terms and the status of miracles also has a positive force. In the final section of the work the miraculous is placed in the context of a world view where the religious healing and rites are included in the same understanding of causality as more prosaic actions. Thus he emphasised the efficacy of religious action to Zacchias who was sceptical of its veracity, and showed that nature could be acted upon by religious as well as physical means.

¹²⁵ See for example Allatios' discussion of natural causes in *De opin.*, ch. XX, p. 162: 'I do not doubt that these things also know some natural causes sometimes, for many are undone by a visual impact or by a ghost which they say they have seen, or contract some disease of the body.'

Conclusion

Allatios' opinions on the 'beliefs of the Greeks today' are not as straightforward as they might seem at first. His links with prominent medical and scientific circles should not lead us to view him as a 'rational' man in the twentieth-century sense of the word, commenting on the 'irrational' and foolish superstitions of seventeenth-century Greece. Certainly, he dismisses some practices as foolish and laughable and rejects outright those which conflict with the teaching of the Catholic church. However, he clearly approves of the popular beliefs, such as popular unction, which are associated with church practices, and uses them to demonstrate the piety of the local population. Even though he dismisses some customs as ridiculous, often he is not denying the actual experience which gave rise to the customs, but the interpretation placed upon it by the Greeks. For example, in the case of the *vrikolakas*, he repudiates the Greek explanation and provides his own description in terms of purgatory, bringing the Greek experience into a Catholic sphere of reference.

His own experience in Greece has obviously had an impact on his outlook here. With the *vrikolakas* he does not deny the existence of undissolved bodies in the graves as he has seen one himself, but provides an explanation more acceptable to himself and his audience. The time spent in Greece as an adult also gave him the opportunity to witness the efficacy or otherwise of certain practices, and so gives him an empirical basis for his account. The accuracy with which the *stoicheion* predicted his arrival and departure in Chios plays a role in his acceptance of it. His own Greek nationality, and connection with Orthodoxy play a part in his balanced and sympathetic account of Greek beliefs.

Nevertheless, his sympathy and understanding do not arise directly out of the Greek tradition, but from the western intellectual and ecclesiastical environment. His understanding of the *vrikolakas* is phrased in terms of western rather than eastern theology. His ecumenical outlook makes him eager to present Greek beliefs and practices, popular as well as official, in terms acceptable to the Catholic church. This is sometimes evident from his translations which bear the marks of a Catholic

interpretation, introducing concepts alien to the Orthodox tradition. Although his ecumenical stance itself may have originated in the experience of inter-communion on Chios as a child, his understandings as an adult should be placed firmly in the context of the ecumenical movement in the western church. His ecumenical perspective provides a criterion for the approval or rejection of practices and the framework in which they can be interpreted and it directs his approach to the selection and interpretation of the popular beliefs. Some of these, like popular unction, which directly correspond to practices in the West, reveal the true piety of the Greeks. Others can be used to show the underlying similarities on points where East and West differ, such as the similarity he sees in the relationship between the *tympaniaios* and Purgatory. Even witchcraft, a problem of great import in the West, is drawn into the dispute. Areas of life rich in popular practice which do not allow him this scope, notably marriage, are ignored altogether. Allatios' interest in Orthodox popular beliefs is that of an ecumenicist.

The ecumenical theme of the work stands out even more clearly when placed in the context of the other letters with which it was published: *De templis Graecorum recentioribus*, a pair of letters written to Jean Morin¹ and *De narthece ecclesiae veteris*, to Gaspaes de Simeonis. Neither of these deal with similar subject matter to the *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinionibus*, as they are concerned with the architecture of Greek churches. The three are linked, however, by the ecumenical perspective which runs through them. In each letter Allatios attempts to explain the customs and traditions of the Greeks to a western audience. In the first of the three letters in the volume Allatios answers Morin's queries concerning the structure of the Greek churches. The two letters contained in the *De templis* are only two of many written to Morin through their years of correspondence arising out of their common interest in the Greek and Latin churches. These letters cover a wide range of subjects from the rituals and terminology of the Orthodox liturgy to the architecture of the buildings. Even in the latter works, such as the *De templis*, where the opportunities offered to an ecumenical perspective are less obvious, Allatios brings it to bear on his

¹ For these letters see Leo Allatios, *The Newer Temples of the Greeks*, translated and annotated with an introduction by Anthony Cutler, London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1969.

description of the churches, aware that the differences between East and West were also reflected in the developments of the external features of the religion as well as the doctrines and dogma. For a fruitful dialogue to occur between the two churches, it was essential that the West understood the terminology of these externals and their process of development. The differences had developed as a consequence of the historical growth and expansion of the churches; that is, the problem of the variation between the two churches lies in their historical development. Thus Allatios distinguishes the modern day churches from their Christian and pagan predecessors. Again, as in the *De opinionibus*, he approaches the subject not through his own experience, which was extremely limited, but through texts and uses his antiquarian expertise to select and elaborate on passages from earlier Byzantine writers. In this way, he guides Morin through the plan of the church, moving from the outside towards the centre dealing with the parts of the church over which East and West differ and also various objects used in worship, from bells to liturgical vessels. In architecture, as well as popular religion, Allatios therefore applies a historical method to trace the development of their respective traditions.

The second letter written to Gasparis de Simeonis is entirely devoted to an examination of one of these architectural questions, that of the narthex. It seems peculiar to give so much attention to this matter. However, two of the questions central to Allatios' work are raised by this issue: the differences between East and West and the historical development of the churches. The western church does not have a narthex and writers were puzzled as to its purpose and relation to the church proper. The term occurred often in ecclesiastical writing but there was no consensus on its relation to the church: should it be considered as part of the church or outside it? This matter required an explanation so that misconceptions would not arise. Again, Allatios deals with the question textually. Thus, in spite of their different subject matter the three works are bound together by a common method and purpose: to narrow the gap between Orthodox and Catholic and to explain the Greek church to the West using a historical method.

Allatios' Neoplatonic outlook, again arising from a western context, is also vital to his understanding of Greek popular practices, and in particular to his acceptance of the *stoicheion*. The *stoicheia*, *kallikantzaroï* and *nereides* are all understood in terms of Neoplatonic spirits of place. These spirits are placed in the context of the hierarchical diffusion of power from God, through the stars to the earth. This understanding comes out his western learning, rather than a deep knowledge and appreciation of contemporary Greek beliefs. This is evident from the fact that it is the astrological meaning of *stoicheion* which ties together the final section of *De opinionibus*, and this sense of *stoicheion* was not current in Greece in the late Byzantine and early modern periods.

While Allatios' interpretation of the *stoicheion* arises out of his Western Neoplatonism, his description of the talismanic and astral *stoicheion* is a product of his antiquarian learning and research. In the *De opinionibus*, the majority of his information comes not from his own personal experience, but arises out of his monumental antiquarian pursuits and his endeavours as a scribe in the Vatican library. These activities provide him with an excellent collection of sources from earlier periods relating to the subjects in hand. Allatios' reliance on manuscript sources should be stressed, and although quite in keeping with the concepts of research in these areas at the time, it is frustrating for a historian wanting to research popular beliefs. Like other writers of the period, Allatios assumes a certain constancy of beliefs and it is difficult to know how far the earlier texts are representative of later traditions.

Allatios' reliance on manuscript evidence is not surprising given that he only lived in Greece until the age of nine, returning once during his life. This, together with his preference for the Roman rite, may be why his understanding of Greek rituals can sometimes be called into question. His mistranslation of ἀπόλυσις in the section on anointing, for example, suggests a lack of personal experience of the Orthodox rite of unction. Again, doubt can also be cast on his knowledge of the relationship between orthodoxy and the beliefs of its faithful when he advocates that the church should bring forward the date of baptism in order to provide protection against the *gello*, a

creature which the Orthodox church on the whole refuses to recognise. Furthermore, the extent to which his experience and education in Italy has shaped his perception of Orthodox beliefs goes further still. On one level he sees connecting themes between Orthodox popular beliefs and western practice. At a deeper level his training in the west has encouraged him to 'rationalise' his childhood experiences, bringing his early encounters with popular religion into line with his Catholicism. His miraculous healing experience, which follows that of the emperor, Michael IX, described by Pachymeres, seems remarkably close to descriptions of *nereides* coming out of his home island of Chios. The tall garlanded women dressed in white correspond to accounts of the *nereides* who also on occasion healed sickness. Therefore, although his own experiences in Greece do have an important role to play in forming his approach to the beliefs, the knowledge this provides him with is limited. Furthermore, he understands his experience in terms of western rather than eastern framework

This is thrown into relief by an examination of the interaction between popular Orthodoxy and both Catholic and Orthodox formal religion. The comparison stresses the links between popular and formal Orthodoxy, revealing them to be, in anthropological terms, the great and little parts of the same tradition. Despite the rejection by the hierarchical church of many of the popular practices discussed here, the two are bound by underlying concerns such as those relating to the period immediately following birth or death. The Catholic church on the other hand, does not share these concerns. In the case of the *gello* and the *vrikolakas* it is able to provide remedies precisely because it stands outwith the tradition and does not share the same conceptions as Orthodoxy. No *vrikolakes* appear in the Catholic cemetery because the Catholic church has different burial practices and different understandings of the fate of the soul after death. Catholic baptism can provide protection against the *gello* because it does not acknowledge in its rites the reciprocal pollution of mother and child immediately following the birth.

However, Allatios' approach also needs to be seen in the context of the increasing Catholic interest and influence in early modern Greece. Some of the confessions of

faith provided by the patriarchs of this period show a shift in their doctrinal positions over issues such as original sin and Purgatory - issues which have a bearing on the interaction between formal and popular religion, particularly in the areas of birth and death. Allatios' text highlights these areas and his comments reveal his perplexity over the failure of the Orthodox church to provide a remedy for popular beliefs, a remedy which appeared obvious from his Catholic viewpoint. The shifting doctrinal positions indeed began to affect the Orthodox church's relationship with popular beliefs and practices. The movement of the church towards the western position on the relationship between sin and debt, for example, affects the understanding of the church of both the *tympaniaios* and the *vrikolakas*.

The text of *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinionibus* should only be used with great care as a source for seventeenth-century popular beliefs. The majority of information arises from Allatios' research into manuscripts, the method he employs assumes continuity between these beliefs and those of his own day, and the interpretations he provides are grounded in the western themes of ecumenicism and Neoplatonism, rather than in any deep knowledge of eastern customs. Nevertheless, the text should not be dismissed. It presents an excellent collection of sources relating to beliefs and practices of earlier periods and Allatios' own experiences are extremely valuable as evidence for beliefs in his own time. Finally it provides a remarkable example of the way in which the Catholic West of this time was striving to understand other cultures, albeit on its own terms. The *De opinionibus*, like all texts dealing with popular beliefs, stands at a boundary between formal and popular practice. This work is unique in that it, like Allatios himself, mediates between popular Orthodoxy on the one hand and formal Catholicism on the other.

Concerning the Beliefs of the Greeks Today: A Letter

Leo Allatios

to the most excellent and learned doctor,

Paulus Zacchias¹

I (114) Such is the way the human mind works, my most distinguished friend, that it neglects more recent events and those on which it can make a certain rather than haphazard judgement because it perceives them with its own eyes. [Instead, the mind] turns all its efforts towards events more distant in time and those which have now long passed away about which it is not in a position to speculate. Working by intuition, [the mind] fishes out those things from the depths of antiquity [as if] through a superficial conjecture and a distorting lens, reflecting not the way it is, but something else long different. For this reason most frequently writers become ridiculous: when they think that they have pleased others they become the laughing stock of those whose good opinion they sought and on who they lavished flattery. For, when our times are carefully investigated by those in the future who desire a reputation for erudition, it will be in relation to these people that we, who saw these things, would say, not that they were foolish, but plainly stupid because they were recollecting things that were extremely tedious and far removed from the truth.

I would therefore wish to learn from these things - whatever happened in antiquity worthy of the said investigation and admiration - what in our age and in the opinion of the majority could not be more warmly be approved. In the cycle of human existence customs, morals virtues, vices, enthusiasms are always the same; the same things return, often more intensely. This field would be a more generous way of

¹ Zacchias (1584-1659) was a famous papal doctor and the father of clinical psychopathology. His most famous work, the *Quaestiones medicolegales*, consisted of eight volumes and was later expanded to ten with the addition of two further tomes of his case material, edited by his nephew Lanfranco Zacchias. The 1630 edition contains no dedications, but the third edition of 1651 opens with a dedication from Allatios, followed by encomia from other important scholars of the day. By the 1674 edition the opening dedication was made by Holstadius, the head scribe of the Vatican library. For details of Zacchias' works see Allatios, *Apes urbanae*, pp. 302-306. For further information see my introduction.

discussing how badly we serve our affairs, [which] are in no way more despicable than those ancient ones, as long as we seek refuge in more ancient times having neglected [our own affairs]; in the meantime we permit these same things, wrapped in the shadows of silence, to be forgotten, so that grasping them afterwards becomes the work of the Delian swimmer.² As long as we lack curiosity about our own times, we are contemptuous of them and seek after alien times.

But a nod in that direction would have been sufficient, since my discourse is with Zacchias, (115) who teaches others and cannot be taught by them. In truth, to conclude my argument, it was always in my mind to offer some commentary on *Striges* and poisoners and on the futile beliefs of men on this subject. An obstacle exists in the shape of works of other famous writers, who have treated these things with great accuracy. Another obstacle is the learning of Zacchias, who in *Quaestiones medicolegales* - by Hercules a divine work³ - has considered, treated, and made fun of all these things, or at least the more important.⁴ Would I therefore be so idle as to offer nothing with which I might oblige my Zacchias and repay with interest the favour which I owe him? Ancient [works] and [information] culled from the writings of others clearly offer no help because he knows and understands all these things very well. I have therefore returned to our own times, to the subject of *striges* and other beliefs of contemporary people in Greece. I have collected them together just as they are and offer them to your discerning judgement. You will see how the evil enemy of the human race will always delude the common people and entangle them with beliefs of senseless folly, in order to lead them away from the true worship of God. If there is anything which does not turn out well - I have no doubts at all that there will be many things - exercise the authority that you always have over me over my writings also. Your humanity and prudence will clothe the offspring of my intelligence with a more generous and elegant apparel, so that it may more graciously and decently approach its parent.

² The people of Delos were renowned divers who could retrieve sponges from the depths of the ocean.

³ This echoes the comment of Leilius Guidiccionus from his dedication in the front of the 1630 edition of Zacchias' work: 'Not even Hercules, tamer of monsters, accomplished such a great task.'

⁴ Zacchias, *Quaestiones*. On the *lamia*, bk II tit. 1, n. 30, p. 150; On poisoners, lib. II tit. ii q. xiii, n. 1-3, pp. 188-189.

II (115) Therefore, passing over what writers, both ancient and modern, have lumped together concerning the name of the *striges* and the *lamiae* and Lilith of the Hebrews, and those things which are blatantly obvious, I shall talk about what contemporaries in Greece think about those things. They believe that certain old crones marked out by their poverty and misery, since they are unable to achieve anything of value for the human race, call up an evil spirit. After entering into a pact with the devil they contrive to the best of their ability those things which delight the devil himself. Therefore [they use] powders, ointments, herbs, and other things of this kind, since they are very timid by nature and take care not to get caught in the act. They cause men little or no bother; to women, as to the simple-minded, and to children especially, they give the evil eye and cause much harm. Their breath and exhalation are so pernicious that through this alone they drive them mad or imperil their lives. They attack infants, both new-born and wailing and suck their blood (116) so avidly that they leave them unconscious; from time to time they even poison them through contact⁵ with so noxious a substance that they always spend what remains of their lives as invalids. Therefore, before new born babies are cleansed by the sacred waters of baptism which is conducted among them on the eighth day after birth, they are never left alone without a nurse. [This is] because, if the parents have sensed the children's anxiety, before the [crones] have imbibed blood, they can drive them away by making a loud noise and clapping their hands. These [crones] quickly hurry outside, lest they be caught. The consequence is, however, that although the child is not dead, he will later suffer harm from that contact, since he will finally die, wailing and refusing food - never being quiet - because of a headache or some damage to the intestines.

And I have often wondered why the Greeks delay [baptism] until the eighth day when they consider the waters of baptism a sovereign remedy against this evil. Nor have I achieved anything by exhortation, for they prefer to spend long hours in vigils

⁵ Ibid, lib. II tit ii q xiii, n1-3, p. 188-189; bk II tit. 1, no 30, p. 150; See David Gentilcore, *Healers*, 1998, p. 103-104, on the close association between poison and magic. For belief in possession caused by eating or drinking in Byzantine and early modern Greece; Greenfield, *Demonology*; Delatte, *Exorcisme*, p. 131, f 43; 15f; 36v.; Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 732.

and manifest peril rather than to curtail the severity of the custom in the slightest. Thus do they love what is theirs! Although they have made almost innumerable changes to such strict observations, as they themselves publicly declare, they most unwisely neglect [to make a change which would be] so useful and convenient in the case of an evil that is so manifest.

However, there will be another place for speaking about these rites of the Greeks.

III (116) They call a witch ‘στρίγλα’, ‘strigla’, the name having been readopted from the Latin and by the more abstruse name of *gelu*, or *gello* or *gillo*.⁶ The ancients say that the *gello* is a very beautiful girl who had ended her life as a virgin, and her ghost, haunting the bedroom, brings early death to children and they say that that Sappho⁷ makes mention of her; hence arises the nickname: *those who are madly in love with children*.⁸ [To cite] *Suidas*:

‘Loving children more than the gello herself.’⁹ This woman suffered an early death, and they supposed that her ghost penetrates children and those dying young.’¹⁰

From a collection of proverbs:

‘The child-coveting gello.’¹¹ (117) On the subject of those who die young or about those who tenderly love their children, but lose them through spoiling them: For the gillo was a certain young woman and since she died young, the people of Lesbos say that her ghost strikes at children,

⁶ ‘Γελού’ or ‘Γελλώ’, or ‘Γελλώ’.

⁷ Sappho was an ancient Greek poet. She was born on Lesbos in c. 612 BC. Most of her work only exists in fragments.

⁸ The saying is: ‘Γελλούς παιδοφιλωτέρα’: which Allatios translates as ‘*de iis, qui puerorum amore insanirent.*’ Sappho, *Poems and Fragments*, p. 171, no. 1157.

⁹ The Greek once again has ‘Γελλούς παιδοφιλωτέρα’ but Allatios provides a different translation in the Latin: ‘*Gellone ipsa magis pueros amans.*’

¹⁰ *Suidas* is the title of a Byzantine lexicon, probably compiled around the eleventh century, although the majority of the material it contains is ancient rather than medieval. *Suidas* often appears as a name rather than a title, as it was interpreted as such in the twelfth century and the mistake was passed on. *Suidas*, vol 1, p. 512, no. 112.

¹¹ Again the Greek denotes this with ‘Γελλούς παιδοφιλωτέρα’ which Allatios translates as ‘*Gello magis amans pueros.*’

and they attribute the early deaths of other people to her. Sappho mentions her.’¹²

[I shall cite] Ignatios, Deacon of Constantinople, in the *Vita Tarasii Patriarchae*, [in Latin] since I do not have the text in Greek.¹³

*‘For according to the Greeks, among their stories, there is a certain woman, called gello, who is said to attack and kill newly born infants since she died an untimely death. Those deceived and beguiled by the spirit of this tale, relate this story as if true [and] try to transfer this accursed deed to weak women, attributing to them the reason why those [children] die before time, by virtue of their conversion into a spirit.’*¹⁴

It results from this that *strigla* are still called *gellones*¹⁵ today because they plot evil for infants, and sucking their blood or by some other method bring about their death.

Nikephoros Callistos [Xanthopoulos],¹⁶ book xviii, cap, ix [writes]:

*‘The mother herself truly said that at the time of birth a certain new and different odour of sweetness was brought forth from the land. [She said] that above all (and almost incredible to me) it is a characteristic of little old women (and she who is called empusa [whom] others may call gello) that they bring the infant from the bedroom, as if about to devour him. However, no harm could come to him.’*¹⁷

Michael Psellos said that the name was derived from the Hebrew:¹⁸

¹² Leutsch, *Corpus Paroemiographorum*, vol. 1, p. 58. Zenobius was a sophist in the time of Hadrian who began to put together collections of proverbs. An English translation is provided in Sappho, *Poems and Fragments*, p. 171.

¹³ Ignatios the Deacon (770/780?-845+), was a pupil and colleague of the Patriarch Tarasios (patriarch 784-806), by whom he was ordained deacon. Tarasios himself had been a layman until the Empress Irene had selected him as the patriarch to restore the worship of images. He presided over the 2nd Council of Nicaea in 787 where this was carried out, but had a stormy patriarchate, criticised by the hard-line Theodore of Studios for his moderate position with respect to the former iconoclasts. After Tarasios’ deposition, Ignatios went over to the Iconoclasts, although he later regretted this.

¹⁴ Ignatios, *Tarasios*, ch. 5, p. 172.

¹⁵ Allatios has given *gello* a Latin plural. The Greek plural is usually given as *γελλοῦδες*.

¹⁶ Nikephoros Kallistos Xanthopoulos was a writer and cleric in Constantinople in the fourteenth century. Little is known of his life.

¹⁷ Kallistos, ‘*Ecclesiasticae Historiae*’, cols 345 D- 348 A.

¹⁸ Michael Psellos (1018 - 1081+) was a prominent figure at the imperial court, holding the position of Court Philosopher under Constantine X, Romanos IV and Michael VII Ducas. He wrote prolifically on all kinds of subjects, although in this work Allatios only excerpts from his minor works on popular

(118) *'The gello truly is an ancient and oft repeated name. It is not a demon, nor a man transformed on the spot into the cruelty of a beast. For all Philosophers emphatically deny the distortion of nature, and neither is a wild beast ever clothed as man nor [does] a man become a wild beast,¹⁹ nor assuredly a demon nor an Angel. Moreover, although I have identified the names of demons and their many faculties in the writings of many, I have not come across the name of gello either in the writings of the Logioi, or in the works of Porphyry, which touch on illusions. But the following recondite volume²⁰ suggested a Hebrew name to me.'*²¹

The author introduces himself as Solomon, describing the names and actions of the demons as if in a drama. [According to him gillo is a power opposed to birth and existence.]²² Accordingly, she²³ is supposed to destroy fetuses, and those newly born. A yearly opportunity was granted to her for killing²⁴ until at last Adrastea bound her with fetters.²⁵

beliefs. Allatios in his approach must address Psellos' understanding of the role of nature, which leaves little room for the miraculous, or popular supernatural beliefs. On Psellos and popular belief see Matons, 'Psellos', 325-349.

¹⁹ See Proclus, *'Timée'*, vol V, 1968, p. 172, 294: 22-295:14. For the Greek see Proclus, *Commentaria*, vol III, 1906, p. 294: 22-295:14.

²⁰ On the *'ἀγνυτικαῖς βίβλοις'* see Otto Kern, 'Verschollenes von Porphyrios', *Hermes* 64 (1919), 217-219.

²¹ This is the *Testament of Solomon*. The work includes medical, demonological and astrological details, and was probably written in Greek, not Hebrew as Psellos suggests, and elements date back to the first century AD. The work tells how the Biblical King Solomon is able to prevent the demons from molesting his servant, who is building the temple for him using the ring given to Solomon by the Archangel Michael. Solomon forces the demons to come forward one by one and tell him their names, which demon commanded them, the various stones which could be used against them, and the Angel which could defeat them. Solomon retains this power over until he sacrifices locusts to another god under the influence of love for a Shunamite girl.

²² Allatios omits this phrase from his Latin translation, although he includes it in his Greek transcription.

²³ Greek has *'the gello'*.

²⁴ The Greek here is *'ἐννιαύσιος'*: yearly, and the translation is anniversarius. However, *'ἐννιαυτός'*: 'the completion of a woman's time' would make better sense. The sentence would then read, 'The woman's time for giving birth is attended by her.' This should be compared to the description of the behaviour of the demon *Obyzouth* in McCown, *Testament*, 13.3-4, pp. 43-45; Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 13:3-4, p. 974: '...I, Solomon asked her, and said, 'Who are you?' She replied, 'Obyzouth. I do not rest at night, but travel around all the world visiting women and divining the hour (when they give birth), I search for them and strangle their newborn infants.' Note that many variations of the name *Obyzouth*: *Byzo Abyzo* etc are often given to the *gello*. *Byzo* appears in the *gello* exorcism below, ch. VII. See also the lists of names in Greenfield, 'Gylou', 124-138. In ancient Greek mythology Adrastea, or Adrasteia, was the nymph who brought up Zeus, feeding him on milk and protected him from his father's attempts to devour him. However, she also appears as the goddess of retribution, and often referred to as Adrastea Nemesis. (See Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 936, p. 301; Plato *Republic*, 451 a.)

I have come across no other references to her during the Christian period, and so

But the fancy which occupies the souls of almost all, confers the same power on elderly women. Therefore it adds wings to those tired by age and will secretly convey them to the children; then it makes them suck blood and devour all the vital fluids which are in the little infant. Therefore midwives call the new born children who waste away 'Gillibrota', that is, devoured by the gello'.²⁶

IV (118) In order to turn away evil, they devise many things, but the most powerful are: night watchmen, often hired under contract, who rest during no part of the night, looking after the boy whether awake or sleeping: lamps, lit before the sacred images, which also light up the whole bedchamber: censing [the bedchamber] with which they venerate the same images and purify the entire house. Some attach a head of garlic to cots, which they have judged to be a remedy against poisonings and to prevent them; others [use] red coral and other things which I need not itemise individually. Yet others conduct themselves more piously since they place the cross of the Lord or his image near to the child.

And, as you may observe, the customs of contemporary Greece do not diverge much from antiquity. For turning away similar evils, they devote themselves to God and the Blessed Virgin and other saints, whom they conceive to be a harbour and refuge against misery and much tormented fortune. They procure help for themselves against evil things through the various acts of piety. For this reason, very many people stuff cotton or silk, dipped in oil from a lamp burning before the said divinities, **(119)** into a hollow reed in order to preserve the oil uncontaminated by contact with other substances. After they return home they smear the chief parts of children and the invalids with it and commend them to the saint from whose lamp the

her significance in the above passage is unclear, unless, as in the case of Zeus, it refers to her protection of young children from those wishing to devour them. However, I have found no trace of a tradition in the Christian period which ascribes this to her as a general characteristic.

²⁶ O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164, lines 1-20. O'Meara also notes where Allatios' text deviates from the one he uses.

oil comes.²⁷ Nor is their hope disappointed; since without any doctor, they devise a remedy for illness in this way.

The oil is called ‘ἅγιον ἔλαιον’ or ‘ἔλεος’,²⁸ ‘holy oil’.²⁹ The author of the *Typicon*³⁰ is a witness that it is a most ancient usage and that it is still used to this day to anoint faces in church, on solemn days of titular saints, or on feast days, once the service is over. I cite from this [work] the manner of [the oil’s] application and the days on which it occurs. Ch XII:

‘Then at last the priest distributes the holy oil to the brothers from the lamp of the saint. If, truly, the abbot is honoured with the priestly dignity he anoints the brothers himself with this blessing, dipping in two fingers and not one only. After the sacred oil has been presented, the absolution takes place.’³¹ And with this sign let him mark the other festivals of saints on which the distribution of holy oil takes place. We celebrate in this manner all the festivals of saints on which vigils take place.’³²

This [ceremony] takes place on the eighth day of September, on the nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary; on the 26th day [of September] sacred to John the Evangelist; on the 26th of October on the festival of St Demetrios if the unguent which flows from his body does not suffice. If it is present then let the brothers be anointed with it; on the 13th of November; on the festival of St John Chrysostom; on the 11th day [of November] on the entry of Mother of God into the Temple; on December 25th at Matins, the day of the Birth of our Lord; on January 1st on the festival of St Basil the Great; on the 20th [of January] on the day of St Euthymios the Archimandrite; on the 25th [of January] on the day of St Gregory Nazianzos; on the 30th [of January] on the day of the three Hierarchs, Basil, Gregory, and Chrysostom; on the 23rd day of April

²⁷ The number of anointings varies in the different manuscripts. Today the invalid is anointed in seven places in the form of a cross: on the forehead, nostrils, both cheeks breast and on the back of the hands. Harakas, *Health*, p. 104.

²⁸ Literally ‘pity’. See Talbot, *Faith Healing*, p. 94 where they explain that ‘this oil was simple transformed into mercy instantly and unbelievably by those who used it and anointed themselves with it in faith.’

²⁹ ‘Sanctum oleum’.

³⁰ A monastic *typicon* is a set of regulations, which lay down the rules of the monastic organisation with respect to behaviour, diet, etc., as well as setting out the order for each of the days services.

³¹ See chapter 7, p. 217 above.

³² I have been unable to trace this quotation.

on the day of St George the Martyr; 8th day of May on the day of St John the Evangelist; 24th June on the Nativity of St John the Baptist; 29th [of June] on the day of the Apostles Peter and Paul; 7th of August on the day of the Transfiguration of our Lady; 29th [of August] on the day of the beheading of John the Baptist.

[To quote] Palladios to Lausos on Macarios the Alexandrian.³³

(120) ‘Commiserating [with her] with an outpouring of prayers, and anointing her with holy oil for twenty days with his own hands, he sent her back to her own city cured from evil.’³⁴ And below; ‘He therefore restored him to his father anointed by holy oil, and sprinkled by blessed water.’³⁵

Cyril of Scythopolis stated in the *Vita Sancti Sabae*:³⁶ ‘Founding a very high refuge and scattering the place with oil from the all-holy cross, he stays there for the days of Lent.’³⁷ And chapter 63: having anointed her whole body with oil from the cross she is set free from the demons.³⁸

In the *Vita Sancti Nili Iunioris*³⁹ those who are vexed by demons are set free by oil from the lamp:

‘After calling the one who discharges the priestly office he ordered him to go into the oratory and, after praying for the sick, to anoint that man with oil of the lamp and send him away. When the deed was done, the

³³ Palladius (363/364-431) was born in Galatia and studied under Evagrius of Pontus. He was made bishop of Helenopolis in Bythinia and later was appointed bishop of Aspura in Galatia. His work, *The Lausiak History*, presents an account of Early Egyptian monasticism. Marcarius was a presbyter and president of the *ptochotrophium* at Alexandria. He is mentioned by Cassian as well as Palladius.

³⁴ Palladius, *Lausiak History*, p. 61.

³⁵ Ibid, p. 65.

³⁶ Cyril of Scythopolis (c. 525-559+), a monk and hagiographer met Saint Sabas (439-532) while still a child. The life relates many miraculous cures, and is an important source for Palestinian monasticism.

³⁷ Cyril of Scythopolis, *Lives*, ch. 27, p. 119.

³⁸ Ibid, p. 174.

³⁹ St Nilos the Younger, also known as Neilos of Rossano (910-1004). His career covered the high point of Greek monasticism in Italy. The life is anonymous. He is mentioned briefly by Allatios in his *De Nili*, ch VII pp. 36-39.

*young man was immediately restored to health and the demon departed from his nostrils like a puff of smoke.*⁴⁰

See also more of the same below.⁴¹

I will cite more recent things which not many people know. [I will quote] George Pachymeres,⁴² *Historia*, book XI chapter 10, on the Emperor Michael, son of the older Andronikos.

'Hence, departing from this place, he moves towards a maritime city called Pegae.'⁴³ there, soon afterwards, seized by sadness and mourning on account of what had happened there, he fell gravely ill, and clearly losing interest in life, he was brought into extreme danger. The doctors' despair at the state of his health [would have been proved correct] had not the renowned compassion of the Virgin and Mother of God shone forth.

It might therefore not be without value to relate this to the narration. In this way the emperor was lying sick, one would say drawing his last breath, for, having been seized by illness he had become unconscious, nor did he respond to the remedies of the doctors. Messengers were therefore sent to his father and emperor. Necessity demanded swiftness; a storm drove them back with a high sea and the voyage was hindered.

At last, after several days, they arrived, not without hazard [together with] the letters sent from there - they were tears rather than letters - in which was made known the kind of illness, how many days the invalid had struggled with it by day and night, what the symptoms were of the illness which was consuming his bodily strength and what sort of remedies he was provided with by them against the disease and finally what was his state of health. And if there was any medicine in possession of doctors, they entreated that it should be sent as quickly as possible if it was to find the invalid still among the living.

When the emperor heard these dire things, immediately despairing for the life of the emperor, he was expecting to hear the worst [news] of all very soon. Nevertheless, he sent doctors without delay and all the most

⁴⁰ Carnandet, 'De Vita S. Nili Abbatis', chapter 58-59, p. 294.

⁴¹ Ibid, chapter 59, p. 295.

⁴² George Pachymeres (1242-c.1310), was a patriarchal official and historian. His history covers the reigns of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282) and Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282-1343). His Greek is very difficult, and this is reflected in Allatios' Latin translation. The emperor Michael here is Michael IX (1293-1320).

⁴³ Pegai is now called Karabiga and is situated on the southern shore of the Sea of Marmara.

powerful of his own drugs. However, for the greater part he always trusted entirely in the mercy of God (122) and of his most praiseworthy mother as he had been accustomed to do on similar occasions. Wherefore, trusting faithfully in [the mercy of God], he ordered a thanks giving service for him, as if the day of Resurrection itself was imminent. Then he therefore prayed with great earnestness, sending oil from the lamp and despatching with lavish gifts a monk who was on his way from the monastery. Accordingly, the monk disembarked on the shore and the invalid returned to his senses. [The monk] was not yet at his bedside, and the nearly dead man [was informed by] pleasant dreams, amongst which a well-dressed woman seemed to snatch a nail from the infected part. She was asking, (saying) 'Did you see the monk descending to the shore, carrying with him gifts from the Mother of God. Those approaching perceived it first with the ears, then with the eyes. And the arrival of the monk with the holy oil, brought a reprieve for the patient, through the performance of a great miracle.'⁴⁴

And it is not unlike the [case of] the deaf and mute [man] to whom the holy Martyr Theodosia of Constantinople, had restored voice and hearing, narrated by Pachymeres in *Histories* book XI, final chapter. For he, 'thoroughly anointed by the oil from the lamp',⁴⁵ had recovered his health with the help of the said martyr. Blemmydes refers to several cases concerning the power of such oil and other marvellous things in *The Life of St Paul of Latros*.⁴⁶

There are very many stories of the oil of the cross which are discussed by authors - which oil, as I also noted in passing, either was designated by the sign of the cross, or obtained from the lamp itself burning before the cross, not only in Jerusalem but also elsewhere or [it was] that which flowed from the cross itself, just like from other corpses of saints, either once only or with perennial flow. If the oil of the lamp ever runs out, they investigate more carefully whether there are any of the sweet smelling herbs with which the Greeks gird their saints. If there is neither herb nor shrub

⁴⁴ Pachymeres, *De Michaelē*, vol. 2, 5:10 pp. 391-392.

⁴⁵ Ibid, vol 2. 9:32, pp. 452-455, esp. p. 453 D5.

⁴⁶ Allatos cites Blemmydes as the author, but the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (ed.), Alexander P. Kazhdan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991 sv 'Paul of Latros' states that the *Life* is anonymous. St Paul of Latros, also called St Paul the Younger, was born in Elaia near Pergamon and died in Latros in 955. He was a correspondent of both the Emperor Constantine VIII Porphyrogenitos and Peter of Bulgaria, and struggled against the Manichean threat throughout his life. Iacobi Sirmondi (ed.), 'Vita Pauli Iunioris in Monte Latro', *Analecta Bollandiana* 11 (1892), ch. 47 p. 172-175; for other miracles see for example: chs. 42, 43, 46., 5-74, 136-82.

available [which was] hung up by others, starting afresh, they collect what they can which usually consists of myrtle or lavender or rosemary. They draw these earnestly across individual parts of the image, making the sign of the cross, and with frequent mention and recommendation of the invalid for whose sake it is being done. Pouring out prayers zealously for his health, they return home and then plucking a leaf from that branch with the two first fingers, they rub the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth and breast of the invalid, entreating blessings. They preserve the rest before the icons until a proper occasion and when it is needed they return again [seeking] its benefit. This was also called *sacred oil*⁴⁷ from the original application [of the remedy], although it was not oil.

V (122) And to clarify the matter, I shall tell you a little story, not about others, but myself. *Καὶ μὴ γελάσης. Ἀληθῆ γὰρ ἐρῶ.* [And do not laugh for I am telling you the truth.] I was no older than seven **(123)** when I was laid up [in bed], suffering from a serious illness. As the illness grew worse, and the doctors toiled in vain, my strength soon began to ebb. I lay scarcely conscious without any movement and perception. The third day came, on which I had not eaten nor spoken. My parents perceived that I was alive only from my breath, a candle having been lit and placed near my mouth. My mother was distressed because I was wasting away through so wretched and drawn out an illness. On that same day she hastened to the church dedicated to the Virgin of Lauretana, who is held in the greatest veneration on Chios. After hearing the service she touched the icon of the Virgin with a branch of myrtle.

She [then] returned as quickly as possible [and] rubbed my face and breast all over with a leaf she had plucked. What a miraculous thing! I recovered my senses, which I did not have before, I opened my eyes, I saw, I recognised my mother who was fussing over me and I understood that health had been restored to me by the Virgin. But, when I tried to say something, the sound got stuck in my throat. However, I followed my mother with my eyes, she put the rest of the myrtle on the chest

⁴⁷ *sacrum oleum*.

opposite on which [stood] the holy and very venerable icons depicted on panels. I fixed my eyes on her, anxious in case someone should seize my medicine.

The day passed. The lamps were lit before the icons, allowing me to see more clearly. Not much of the night had passed when I saw two women proceeding from the corner of the house, with very beautiful faces, dressed in very white and shining clothes, head and breast crowded with flowers; and each one plucked off a single leaf from the myrtle branch. Not long after another pair with the same appearance plucked a pair of leaves and in this way [the women] formed a continuous line, one pair after the other. I was sad that the remedy was taken from me and that I had not been able to indicate the sorrow by word of mouth. After them, behold, another woman, taller than all [the rest], more ornate, more beautiful, gesturing to the others like a noble woman, not content with a leaf, took the whole branch and when she left I was moved to grief that I was deprived of such a blessing.

I strained my voice as much as I could, and shouted, 'κυράτζα, κυράτζα', 'Mistress, mistress,' in the way that children call their mothers. My mother was watching over me. When she heard my voice, having briefly gone to bed she ran to me. 'What is it, son?', she said. 'What is it?' I shouted: 'Did you see that woman who not content with a leaf took the whole myrtle?' She immediately ran towards [the place] where she had put the myrtle and looked. Seeing everything safe, she said to me: 'Let your soul be of good cheer, son. No one has taken away the myrtle. It is all still here.' 'All of it?', I replied, (124) 'That taken by the woman just now is far away.' '[But] here it is, my son,' she said. 'I do not believe you. It is not. You are teasing me.' She, a careful woman at other times and by nature clever, did not wish to touch the branch. However, to satisfy me, who was all upset, she picked it up. And immediately, everything I had observed with open eyes vanished. She came to me. 'What do you say son?' She said, 'Look at the branch.' And after taking a leaf, she rubbed my head and breast.

She asked if I needed anything. I replied that I wanted food. She brought it. I ate, I drank. Then at last she asked if there was anything else disagreeable on my mind. I said, 'Nothing. It is at rest.' 'Be calm', she said, and left. I rested. Rising at the crack of dawn, I put on my clothes, feeling well. When I tried to walk could not move my feet. Wherefore, like children who are unable to move by themselves, I wrapped a bandage around my waist and, hanging on to it, I tried to walk until it was made plain to all that my health was restored, not by the strength of human nature but by the kindness of the blessed Virgin. Ταῦτα ἐστὶν ἃ ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀκηκοῶς οὐδὲ καθεύδων, ἀλλ' ἐνείδως, καὶ παθὼν πιστεύω ἀληθῆ εἶναι.⁴⁸ (These are things which I have not heard, nor dreamed, but have known well and through experience I believe them to be true.)⁴⁹

VI (124) Others drive away illness not with oil from the lamp, but [with oil] which they themselves bless. The author of the *Vita Sancti Theodori Studitae*⁵⁰ [writes]: 'Immediately sending oil, which [Theodore] has blessed, [Theodore] ordered the patient to be anointed with it. I immediately executed the order myself, and anointed the body of the girl with the oil. After that anointing, the girl suddenly recovered and was freed from that most burning fever.'⁵¹ Others use water from the washing of the holy altar on the (festival of) Maundy Thursday. The faithful anoint themselves with this on the same day as the church is washed. *Typicon* chapter 41: 'And with these

⁴⁸ This is not translated into Latin

⁴⁹ Zacchias, in his capacity as a member of the Congregation of the Rota laid down strict criteria which cures had to meet if they were to be considered miraculous. See his *Quaestiones*, bk. IV, tit. i q. 8, pp. 223-6.

⁵⁰ Theodore the Studite (759-826) was a theologian, militant monastic reformer and iconophile.

⁵¹ 'Vita S. Theodori Studitae', in J.P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, Paris: Petit-Montrouge, vol. 99, 1860, cols. 209-210. This is not taken from the shorter edition of the life which is edited by Allatios in Angelo Mai, *Theodori Studitae Vita Michaelis*, in Angelo Mai (ed.), *Novae patrum bibliothecae tomus primus [-decimus]*, Rome, typis S. Cong. Propagando Chr. Nomini, 1852-1905. Vol VI, 1853 no. X, pp. 293-363, and reproduced in Migne *op.cit.* cols 233-328. It is significant that Allatios does not introduce the above quotation as the work of Michael the Monk. Although both the shorter and the longer versions appear under his name, Allatios recognised what is now acknowledged, that it is the shorter life alone which should be attributed to this author. Allatios' introduction to this work also suggests why he did not mention the author by name, for it was only after a thorough investigation of the work that he concluded that it was by Michael. See Leo Allatios, 'De Diatriba Theodori', in Angelo Mai, *Novae patrum bibliothecae tomus primus [-decimus]*, Romae, typis s. Cong. Propagando chr. nomini, vol VI, no. 98, pp. 158; See also Allatios' Introduction to the *Life* in Mai, cited above. Migne reproduces notes from the *Diatriba* in *P. G.* vol. 99, cols. 49-58.

actions completed the abbot stands before the holy altar, and with the water from the cleansing of the holy altar he anoints all the brothers.' Others believe the most efficacious remedy against disease [consists of] the water used to wash the feet of twelve men: a custom familiar to the ancient church⁵² [which is] celebrated on that same day. In the same *Typicon* in chapter 42 he writes, 'After the prayers were finished, all were anointed from the water used to wash the brothers.'

Concerning the power of holy water against demons, and spells (125) and various sicknesses, see many examples in the writings of Ioannes Stephanus Durand *De Ritibus Ecclesiae Catholicae*, Book 1, chapter 21, number iv and following;⁵³ and again in Gretser *De Benedictionibus*.⁵⁴ Others, not only from the Greeks, but also from the Latins, adopt for themselves another almost wholesome remedy in order to repel evil. After the celebration of the mass, when the sacraments have been taken and the chalice has been cleansed, they pour the water which remained in the bottle into the chalice and they wash it. Afterwards they collect up [the water] in the same bottle and take it to children and invalids. By making them drink it they show regard for their health. They gave it the sufficiently apt and useful name of 'ἀπομύρωμα'⁵⁵ which [literally] means the washing after the true unction, which is Christ.⁵⁶ For the ancients used to call Christ 'Unction', quoting from Dionysios the Areopagite⁵⁷ from *De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia*, chapter IV:

'[Jesus is] the rich source from which the divine fragrances are obtained, and very divine fragrances in divine proportions are poured into the intellects which have a special affinity with the Divinity: which as a

⁵² The bishop washes the feet of twelve priests in commemoration of the washing of the feet of the twelve disciples by Jesus before Passover, after the Last Supper. See John 13: 1-20.

⁵³ Durand, *De ritibus*, I:21. It is actually no. iii, p. 135-136 which is concerned with the power of holy water over demons, spells and sicknesses. Number iv concerns the errors of heretics concerning holy water.

⁵⁴ Gretser, *de benedictionibus*, I: 15 pp. 53-64; II:7 p.p. 92-95; II: 10-20 pp. 101-135; and concerning holy oil: XXII-XXIV, pp. 137-149.

⁵⁵ 'ἀπομύρωμα': Lampe, *Patristic Lexicon*, cites it as: 'Holy oil with healing properties'; E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, New York: Ungar, 1957 explains it as: 'fragrant fluid which is believed to exude from the relics of distinguished saints.'

⁵⁶ See chapter 7, pp. 210-211 above. See for examples of anointing of Christ Mt 26: 7, Mk 14.3, Jn 12.3. Christ was also the unction with which Christians were anointed and which brought them into the kingdom of God. See 1 Jn. 2:27.

⁵⁷ This author flourished c. 500 AD. He was greatly influenced by Neoplatonic works.

*result derive spiritual sustenance under the impulsion of a certain sweetness and with the perception of the holy sweetness of the most divine exhalations. This occurs through the absorption of sweet-smelling odours in as much as those intellects participate in the divine.*⁵⁸

And what they teach concerning the washing of the hands of the priest after the celebration of the mass is similar to that in use among westerners. Abbot Desiderius of Monte Cassino, who later became Pope Victor III,⁵⁹ narrates in his *Dialogi* [the following incident concerning] the city of Lucca: it was noised abroad that whoever had been struck down by fever should drink from the water which had run over the hands of Joannes, abbot of the monastery, a man conspicuous for his holiness, after the celebration of the mass. [Desiderius goes on to recount how] Pope Alexander, [hearing this] seized by fever, ordered that water of this kind to be carried secretly to him; [and how] after drinking it, he quickly made a full recovery.⁶⁰

And Leo of Ostia in his *Chronica* chapter 35, writes that the same Pope Alexander,⁶¹ among other miracles performed before his death, healed a lame woman at Aquinum when he gave her water to drink in which he had washed his hands after the celebration of mass.⁶² And these things indeed [point to] the manifest piety which still shines forth in the Greek nation.

⁵⁸ See Pseudo Dionysios, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, 1987, 3:4, 480 A, p. 228-229.

⁵⁹ Desiderius (1027-1087), became a Benedictine monk at Monte Cassino, despite the objections of his family. He was appointed abbot in 1058, and cardinal priest of S. Cecilia in 1059. In 1086 he was elected to the papal throne against his wishes, and took the name Victor III. His *Dialogues* on the miracles of St Benedict were written between 1076 and 1079.

⁶⁰ Pope Victor III (Abbot Desiderius of Monte Cassino), 'Dialogi', in J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, Paris: Petit-Montrouge, vol. 149, 1882, cols. 971 - 972.

⁶¹ Pope Alexander (1061-1073), was elected with the support of Cardinal Hildebrand (later Gregory VII), in the disorder which followed the death of Nicolas II. He retained his position as Bishop of Lucca, received in 1057.

⁶² Leo of Ostia (1046-1115), also known as Leo Marsicanus, was the archivist of the monastery of Monte Cassino. He was the author of the early chapters of the *Chronicon Monasterii Casinensis*, the most important source for the history of the monastery. Leo of Ostia (Leo Marsicanus), *Die Chronik von Montecassino*, Hartmut Hoffmann (ed.), Hanover: Hahn, 1980, ch. 36a, pp. 412-413.

VII (126) Others turn to talismans and amulets.⁶³ I will copy down some things which I was able to obtain, although these are mutilated and cut short, the stupidity of which will make you laugh.⁶⁴

(129) '**** lest it enters the tower and devours my infant just as it did not long ago. But when the Saints Sisynios and Synidoros saw their sister crying, they also wailed immoderately. Immediately kneeling on the ground they prayed to God to supply them with the ability and strength against the accursed gylo, [that was] needed to catch her. And when they had been supplied with the ability by the omnipotent God, they began to pursue the accursed gylo on horseback.

(130) They made investigations on the way: whatever they met they questioned. Wherefore they asked a willow tree they met on the way whether it had seen the accursed gylo as she flew past that place. It denied that it had seen her. The saints cursed it, "You will never ever produce fruit and men will not eat (from) it."⁶⁵ Then the saints continued their journey at speed. They met a blackberry bush and asked whether it had seen the accursed gylo flying. Similarly it denied that it had seen her. The saints cursed it too: "Your roots will send out shoots and your shoots roots, and your fruit will be useless, and men will not gain sustenance from it." Again the saints continued their journey; and they came across a blessed olive tree and they questioned it: They asked whether it had seen the accursed gylo flying there. It replied to the saints, "Saints of God, continue your journey as quickly as possible, for she is approaching the sea shore." Then the Saints Sisynios and Synidoros blessed it, "Your fruit shall be abundant and holy men will be enlightened through it and kings and paupers will be delighted by it."

When the saints reached the shore, they saw the accursed gylo flying around. As soon as she observed them, she changed into a fish and the saints became fishermen, and caught her. Again the accursed gylo turned into a swallow and the saints, as it had been granted to them, turned into falcons and pursued her. When she realised that she was not able to deceive the saints, she took on the shape of a goat hair and settled in the beard of the king so that they would not recognise her. When the

⁶³ Allatios transliterates a Greek word 'περίπτα': (lit.) something which hangs around the neck, i.e. an amulet.

⁶⁴ The two passages which follow are texts used to exorcise the *gello*, the first of which has lost its opening sentences, i.e. it is mutilated. The second is truncated, as it does not contain the customary list of the twelve and a half names of the *gello*, nor the full series of prayers of the exorcism which the first includes.

⁶⁵ There is a biblical allusion here to the cursing of the fig tree by Christ. See Mark 11:12-14 and Matthew 21:18-22.

saints met the king, after obeisance, they said "Lord king, we seek one thing from your majesty; which you may grant as we desire; and if it might please your lordship to grant us that request, quickly tell us, because it is weighing on our minds." The king replied to the saints: "By my kingdom, I shall grant whatever you seek, since I see that you are noble and wise." And the holy men said to the king: "We seek nothing from your kingdom except a goat hair, which is in your beard, so that you may see and wonder." Then [the king] said, "Remove it." Therefore with outstretched hands, the saints most reverently and carefully removed [the hair].

As the gylo now realised she was no longer able to deceive the saints, she immediately turned into a woman. As soon as the king saw this he was beside himself and asked the saints about this matter. They revealed everything to the king as it had happened. And the king was astonished. But the saints seized the accursed gylo by the hair, threw her on to the ground, and after piling on increasingly brutal blows they said, "Now at last put an end, oh accursed gylo, to the killing of infants of Christians and of N,⁶⁶ the servant of God." But the (131) accursed gylo begged the saints, saying, "Leave me alone, saints, and do not vex me so cruelly, and I will speak to you." Then the saints Sisynios and Synidoros said, "Unless you promise under oath nevermore to attack the daughters⁶⁷ of N the servant of God, and return to us our sister Melitene's children, whom you killed, we will not spare your life."

And the accursed gylo replied to the saints, "If you are able to produce in the palm of your hand the milk which you sucked from your mother's breast, I will restore the children of Melitene." Immediately the saints, with eyes turned to heaven, prevailed upon God for this and suddenly they spat [into their hands] something like milk. They said to the accursed gylo, "Look! We have brought the maternal milk which we sucked. Return to us the children of Melitene who you slew, now, as you promised, lest we torture you with savage torments." Then the accursed gylo, since she did not know what to do, returned the child, whom she had killed in the tower to [Melitene].

And again, the holy men of God vehemently whipped her saying, "Put an end, accursed gylo, to the killing of the sons of Christians and of N, the servant of God." The accursed gylo begged the saints, "Leave me alone, Sysynios and Synidoros and so that you will not utterly kill me, I will tell you what must be done to prevent me entering that place, but always keep me standing 75 stades away." "What must be done by us, Oh accursed

⁶⁶ This the point in the exorcism when the name of the individual in question would be stated.

⁶⁷ i.e. the women giving birth to the children.

gylo?" And she said, "If anyone is able to write my twelve and a half names I will not go into that church nor in the house of N the servant of God, who possesses [this talisman]; nor enter his wife, nor their sons, but I shall wander a long way off, 75 stades from the house."

Then the holy men said, "Tell us accursed gylo, your accursed names as quickly as possible, before we destroy you savagely". And she said, "My first name is Gylo, my second Morrha, my third Byzo, my fourth Marmaro, my fifth Petasia, my sixth Pelagia, my seventh Bordona, my eighth Apleto, my ninth Chomodracaena, my tenth Anabardalea, my eleventh Psychoanaspastria, my twelfth Paedopniktria, the half Strigla."⁶⁸

[Prayer]

Oh Saints Sisynios and Synidoros, bring help to N the servant of God and his wife and their sons, who have this safeguard (phylactery), and bind and fetter with lead bonds every evil spirit whether they inhabit idols or the aerial [wastes], the idolic and aerial spirits, and the accursed gylo, so that they do not have the power nor strength to approach the house of N the servant of God, nor his wife, nor their children, either during the day or at night, either in the middle of the night, or in the middle of the day. But let every terrestrial or aerial demon, and air demon and evil spirit and the accursed gylo stay 75 stades distant from the house of N the servant of God and his wife, and from their sons.

Oh Saint Patapus, **(132)** strike against every evil demon, the demon of midday and of midnight; keep [them] from the house of N the servant of God, and from his family, and those who read this prayer. Saint Marina, who bound and defeated Belzebub bind and keep in check and strike all demons and spirits of the air from the house of N the servant of God and from the wife of N and from their children. Oh St Nicholas, performer of miracles, oh, St George, bring help. St Theodore the Recruit, and leader of forces, bring help to N the servant of God, and his wife, and children; and strike, and put to flight, and bind every demon, and every idolatrous and aerial spirit, and all the wicked spirits, from the house of N the servant of God, and his wife, and their children; so that they shall prosper now and not be attacked by any evil in future, and see the children of their children, and rejoice in them, and glorify the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Sprit, now and always, forevermore, Amen.

A Prayer to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁶⁸On the meanings of these names see Perdrizet, *Negotium Perambulans in Tenebris*, pp. 21-23.

Oh Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, you who came into the world to make the human race safe from the tyranny of the devil, hear me, your servant, supplicating for your servant N, and for his wife, and their children. By your grace and great mercy send the shining angel so that he may protect and defend the children of your servants N and N from all evil which attacks them.⁶⁹ Cover them with the shadow of your wings⁷⁰; make all enemies and adversaries flee from them; make their life peaceful at home and free from trouble, and bestow on them, Oh Lord, the grace of your mercy, and give them the fruit of their womb so that they will live and become old. Defend them, Lord, from all evil, and from the midday demon and the nocturnal demon, and from wicked spirits and from the accursed gylo. Lord, do not let the evil and unclean spirits have the power and strength themselves to approach N the servant of God, and his wife and their children, since they invoke your holy name during the night and during the day, and these servants of yours take refuge in you, O Lord, and pray and beseech your mercy for their children, that you will give prosperity to them and bestow children on his children, and they will glorify you with your most holy name; since you are the giver, and bestower of blessings we send you the glory to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always for ever and ever, Amen.

Prayer to the Very Holy Mother of God.

My Lady, mother of my Lord, you who gave birth supernaturally to the Word of God, through the flesh⁷¹ without seed and (supernaturally) gave birth; for indeed you, a virgin, gave birth and you remained a virgin with the virginity in no way impaired. Pray therefore, my Lady, to your son and God, for these your servants N and N so that he may receive their children into grace through your intercessions: for the supplication of the mother is very powerful for obtaining the blessing of the Lord. Therefore, I pray, my Lady, for your swiftest aid,⁷² so that the children of these your servants N and N may grow up, and that they may live and

⁶⁹ In other variations of the gello story it is the Archangel Michael or Raphael who defeats the gello, rather than the saintly brothers. See the account in K. Sathas (ed.), *Μεσαιωνική Βιβλιοθήκη*, Paris, 1876, vol. 5, p. 576-577. For other versions of the gello story featuring the Archangel Michael see Greenfield, 'Gylou', 103-121. Michael is the angel of death who collects the souls of the faithful, but is also known as the prince of Light as he leads the angels of light in the battle against the angels of darkness. Raphael, as his name denotes, was the angel of healing, and also acted as the agent of the sun. He has also been called the guide to hell. In the Testament of Solomon it was he or Michael, depending on the manuscript, who brought the ring to Solomon which gave him power over demons. See McCown, *Testament*, 1: 6, p. 10; Obyzouth, whose relation to the gello is discussed above is thwarted by Raphael, 13:6, p. 44; on the power of the angels over other demons 5:9, p. 23; 18:5-8, p. 52.

⁷⁰ Psalm 57:1.

⁷¹ 'κάτα σάρκα': this often appears in contrast to Christ's spiritual birth 'κάτα πνεῦμα'.

⁷² Domina velocissima is a name of the Mother of God, in Latin. Greek has 'δέομαι οὖν Δέσποινά μου τὴν σὴν ὀξυτάτην βοήθειαν'.

give thanks in the sight of the Lord for all the days of their lives. Thus let it be, my Lady.

Listen to me, a sinner and unworthy servant and although I am a sinner, do not despise my poor and miserable prayer but protect the children of your servants and let them live and send the Angel of Light⁷³ so that he may protect and defend them from all evil, from wicked spirits, and from fiends which are in the air, and not let them be singled out by other [demons] and by the accursed gylo lest harm comes to them and to their children. Bestow, my Holy Lady, Mother of God, your grace, and your pity so that the children of your servants may live, and see the children of their children and their hearts rejoice and glorify your most holy, and most blessed name above all my Lady. Since you are blessed in all generations and your name is magnified for ever and ever. Amen.'

Others relate a shorter version of these events, avoiding too much verbosity. Carolus Avantius,⁷⁴ who combines outstanding intelligence with a profound knowledge of science brought this to my attention from a manuscript. It can be translated as follows:

(135) *'Under the consulate of King Laurentios, there was a woman in the region of Austidis, or Arabia, by the name of Melitene, who gave birth to seven children, who the accursed creature called Gelu snatched from her. And again Melitene conceived and, with the birth very near, she built a tower which she fortified inside and out and placed twenty-five years' supplies in the tower.⁷⁵ Then Melitene entered the tower with two girls.*

Furthermore, the saints of God, Sissinios and Sisynodoros, brothers of Melitene, were soldiering in Numeria, or rather Arabia. Therefore, at some point it so happened that when the army was discharged to winter quarters, they came to the tower to visit their own sister. When they arrived at the gates, straining their voices, they shouted to be let in. Melitene did not want to open the gates at all, saying, "I cannot open them for you, for a son was born to me and I am full of fear. Therefore I shall not open [the gates]." They strained their voices, saying, "Open to us, for we are the messengers of God, and we bring the mysteries of God." She opened [the gates] and the saints of God entered. At the

⁷³ *'Angelum luminosum'*: lit the luminous angel. the Archangel Michael see above on this point. Compare to *Angelum lucis*, p. 146 of Allatios' text, which is used to refer to Lucifer.

⁷⁴ See chapter 1 p. 54 . 114 above.

⁷⁵ The Latin translation from the Greek is faulty here, and so I have followed the Greek text.

same time an unclean spirit came up from the ground and it entered the throat of one of the horses of the saints. In the middle of the night it killed the child.

Wailing bitterly, Melitene said with an anguished voice, "O Sisinnios, and you Sisynodorus, what have you done to me? For that reason I would not have opened the door to you." The saints of God, raising their hands to heaven, prayed that he might give them power over that reviled/accursed woman. After they had prayed for a long time, the angel of God was sent [to them]. He said to them, "God listened to your prayers, and sent me to strengthen you and give you strength for whatever you strive after."

After they went out of the tower, they mounted their horses which had bridles like wings. They searched through bottomless gorges and caverns of the mountains of Lebanon. When they came across a pine, the saints asked whether it had seen the accursed woman passing. It replied that he had not seen her. And the saints said, **(136)** "Because you concealed the accursed one from us, and you hid the truth, your shoot will be without roots and your fruit quite dry." Then they met an olive tree and they said to it, "Olive, have you seen the accursed woman passing by?" She replied, "I have seen her, my Lords, passing around the sea by this way and that, under twenty grasses, under the head of Phasion, under the marrow of children. So it is, she remains there." And the saints said, "Let your fruit be blessed and eaten in the temple of the Lord."

Then they captured that accursed woman on the shore of the sea and they said to her, "God orders you through us, his useless servants, to hold still." But the accursed woman, seeing the saints threw herself into the sea. The saints in truth, moving quickly after her, caught her. And the reviled woman said, "O Sisinnios and Sisynodoros, why do you annoy me so much?" And St Sisinnios said, "Return the seven children of Melitene to me"⁷⁶ and I shall not vex you any longer." And the reviled woman replied, "If you return to me the maternal milk which you have sucked, I shall also return the seven children of Melitene." Then the Saint of God, Sisinnios, called upon God: "Lord," he said, "you have said that nothing will be impossible with God."⁷⁷ Show in me your goodness too, so that all may know your name, that you alone are God."⁷⁸ And immediately the saint of God Sisinnios yielded the maternal milk from his mouth. And he said to the accursed woman, "Look my maternal milk! And you for your

⁷⁶ The tale omits to mention the fate of the eighth child, whose death was the cause of the saints' pursuit of the gello.

⁷⁷ Luke 1:37.

⁷⁸ Psalm 86:17.

part shall return the seven children of Melitene.” Immediately she also returned the seven children of Melitene. The accursed one said quietly, “I beseech you, saints of God, do not vex me any longer, and wherever this talisman may lie, I shall not enter, and when it is on a bed, I shall not enter but flee, and I shall hurry sixty stades away. If anyone writes my twelve names, I shall not damage nor attack their house, nor shall I destroy their animals, and I shall not have power over their limbs.”

Then Saint Sisinnios adjured her, saying, “I adjure you, through the name of God, which the rock heard and split.”⁷⁹ God of Saint Mamantis, Saint Polycarp, Saint Tarasios, Saint Domitios, the Saint and Martyr Panteleemon, and Hermolas, Saint and Martyr Nicetas, Saint Babylas, Saint Porphyrios, Saint Blasios, Saint Eulogios, Saint Nicholas, Saint Basil, Saint John Chrysostomos, Saint Leo, Saint Eleutherios, Saint Demetrios, Saint George, Saint Theodore, Saint James of Persia, Saint John the Prophet, Precursor and Baptist; of Saint John the Theologian, Saint Orestes, Saint Andrew, the 318 Saints of the Fathers, the Doctor Saints Cosmas and Damian, Saint Epiphanius, Saint Irenarchos, Saint and Martyr, Auxentios, Eugenios, Orestes, Mardarios, and Lucia the Virgin and the Holy Martyrs, Pegasios, Aphthonios, Elpidiphoros, and Anempodistos, of our very praiseworthy Lady Mother of God and always Virgin Mary, and all the saints. Amen.”

And these are the absurdities of others, by which very silly men believe that they drive off dangers presented by little old women and are even more obsessed than those thoroughly demented women.

VIII (137) When you also observe these [silly men] more carefully, they put on a show of religion and piety. Their beards are excessively long, bushy, and hanging down over their chests. [They have] a projecting nose, sunken eyes, an all pervading pallor combined with shrivelled skin; their garb [consists of] a poorly made garment which covers their body which is open to the winds. They respect everything; they adore all; they frequently draw back to give way to anyone they meet. So that more gracious favour should follow, they dress up their action with a certain inclination of the head or by a bowing of the shoulders. Even if you have not addressed [such] men, as long as you have [simply] looked at them intently, they approach, they smile,

⁷⁹ Jeremiah 11:16, ‘Are [my words] not like a hammer that splinters rock?’

they pray that all will be well. Because they claim that for a long time God has done whatever they asked of Him;⁸⁰ because they have understood that the pious man and a friend of the destitute is necessary on other occasions but is particularly necessary at this point in time, when disasters rush in from all sides.

Then [a man of this kind] drags, but as if he did not want to, a sigh from the depths of his heart; and as if unwillingly he bursts into tears. Then, with eyes closed, he murmurs something quietly and as if filled by the spirit and meditating on profound things he turns quickly on his heels and if he perceives that he is being observed, he enters the holy church or chapel and once he has taken up position fidgets about. He mutters under his breath to all the saints depicted there until exhausted or, rather, because there is no one to see him he goes away. These preludes completed, he returns again to the scene, and becomes more intimate, since he accosts and runs up to the same man, embraces him, kisses his hands and even seeks an *εὐλογία* (blessing) from the person as zealously as possible.

He says that he has seen, I don't know what, in his mind's eye and that he has recognised by very certain argument how dear his [own] life is to God. His deeds and words indicate these things openly. So many poor, so many wretched, saved from want and toil by his generosity, are not insignificant witnesses to his statement. He also has many things with which he is able to alleviate the needs of men. However, he behaves more circumspectly with these people because he knows that when he acts without any [apparent] hope of reward, the recipients of his favours will give much more generously. Therefore his munificence is very frequently curtailed whenever he cares for the hearts of men and for God alone, not money.

There follows afterwards a huge catalogue of things with which he has made other peoples' houses very lucky: he does not lack amulets and talismans to heal the illnesses of all kinds and repel harm from the fields and other wares. [He claims that]

⁸⁰ Luke 18:29.

as long as he wishes, wealth springs from him. Wherever he stays there will be no place for bad fortune in the future.

Many other things are also reserved to him, which, whenever the opportunity arose would be dispensed for the benefit of friends. In this way some man or other, who longs for nothing but gain, seized by the hope of so much treasure asks the [holy] man to come back home together [with him] for it would give him great pleasure, if he would do him [the honour]. At first he dissembles: [it is more than] he can expect; he had promised [to visit] others; he would come some other time which he knew to be more propitious: sometimes he postpones his departure for this reason. But if hunger presses, he says, "Even if you have not invited me, now I am of a mind to come, for the blessings which are waiting for your house should no longer be hidden." He whispered many things on the very threshold of the door. After entering he looked round every room, saying over and over again, "Oh fortunate house!" Then he climbs the stairs, he purifies everything, prays for prosperity and so that he seemed to be doing something he sings a little melody dug out from his repertoire although the song is badly performed.

All who are in the house admire the refinement and piety of the man. They ask him to visit more often. Then they send him away loaded with presents. He will arrive later when he has not been invited. He brings [with him] inappropriate medicines (lit troublesome things), and fills the house with inappropriate remedies of this sort,/his attempts to bring good luck misfire as he fills the house with inappropriate charms and making himself known to the neighbours, he pollutes the whole neighbourhood [with his presence]. These wretched men do not understand that he who cheats others for these things will supply no riches and wealth to others: rather than supporting others, he first uses others to support himself.

Meanwhile, rendered more cautious by the example of others, wiser men sometimes pursue that type of man, arrest him, lead him to the Magistrate, and, as if they were

pests, very often punish and banish them. But however careful they are, they cannot succeed in entirely rooting out these people.

But we have already digressed long enough. Let us return to the subject.

IX (138) Michael Psellos attributes similar diseases of children to natural causes, which we see in our research to arise from witches:

(139) 'However, that disease is proper to the bodies of the newly born, and to new offspring: wherefore the sickness is called infantile by many. But when it is studied carefully, that sickness is [a form] of epilepsy which affects the tissues of the brain on account of the sweating of the limbs. In this case, after the solid substance has been consumed the bowels waste away due to privation and bring the children to their death.

*However, the scholars know that these things have been revealed about human life. Let you examine somewhat further, in part reaching for more elevated opinions, in part reviewing the superstitions from those of ancient times to popular beliefs.*⁸¹

And thus Psellos!

X (139) Just as [Psellos] fails to satisfy in his discussion of witches, so he is greatly to be congratulated on his treatment of the *babutzikarios*:

*(140) 'Babutzikarios crept from the absurdities of the Greek pagans into the beliefs of men. For there is a certain babo in the songs of Orpheos, a nocturnal Goddess, a tall shadowy creature.'*⁸² *The Philosopher Porphyry also handed down about these same things [in a story] that there is a northern and barbarian people [which is] terrified by similar nocturnal spectres, which they claim also burn during the night and [leave behind] certain thin and fine burnt bodies similar to the texture of spiders webs which they come across during the day. Therefore the*

⁸¹ O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 164, lines 20-28.

⁸² Orpheos, *Orphicorum fragmenta*, Otto Kern (ed.), Berolini: Weidmannos, 1922, fr. 53.

*masses turned that babo into babutzikarios, who has no place among mortals, but the more timid among men imagine that it is the devil.*⁸³

There was a little man of my acquaintance of a nervous disposition and very prone to making things up. Ghosts appeared to this man, not only during the night, but also during the day, for he saw apparitions, just like Orestes in the Eumenides and invented that which in no way existed.⁸⁴ However, proceeding slowly at night, he turned round pierced with fear and pictured in the crowd the babutzikarios who was not there. This arose from the common infection of body and mind, for he was troubled by an inherited disease. At that time he could not see very well: his eyes did not give out pure light,⁸⁵ and what [in fact] they perceived internally, seemed to him [to come] from the outside. And they identified this sickness as a demon.⁸⁶

One should not be surprised that this condition manifests itself as a demon, not all the time, but on the days on which we celebrate the birth of Christ, and honour his holy baptism. For, when men go around visiting [each other] at night, on account of the [demands] of the festivities, they then suffer this affliction. And in this way the superstition about the demon took hold.⁸⁷

Psellos says sufficient things on this matter [and so. I need not discuss it more fully]: For neither is he who was born in the week⁸⁸ of Christ's birth able to change his own shape and assume another, nor on that account does the demon ever torment him.

⁸³ Proclus, 'Timée', vol III, 1967, p. 33, 11:11-34:11:24. Proclus, *Commentaria*, vol II, 1904, 11:11-24.

⁸⁴ Orestes was the mythological son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, who killed his mother, and her lover, Aegisthus, to avenge their murder of Agamemnon. In many accounts of the tale (Aeschylus' *Choephoroi*, Euripides' *Electra*, for example) Orestes is then pursued by the Eumenides, or *Erinyes*, Fates. However, here Allatios seems to have in mind the *Orestes* of Euripides, where the Eumenides are imagined phantoms of his guilty conscience. Compare Joseph Bidez, *Catalogue des manuscrits alchimiques grecs*, 8 vols., Brussels: M. Lamertin, 1924-1932. Vol. VI: Michael Psellos, 1928, 'Τοῦ φιλοσόφου κῦρ Μιχαὴλ Ψελλοῦ σύννοψις περὶ τοῦ τῆς ἀστραπῆς πυρὸς καὶ βροντῆς καὶ κεραυνῶν καὶ ἐτέρων μετεώρων ἐρωτήσεων', pp. 63:18-20. Euripides, *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, edited and translated by Arthur S. Way, London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1953, lines 285-292, p. 305; Euripides, *Orestes*, edited and translated by Arthur S. Way, London, 1953, lines 24, 35ff, p. 129; 255-7, p. 147; 407-8, p. 159 etc.

⁸⁵ The Byzantines thought that eyes gave out light. If someone was blind that light was trapped within them.

⁸⁶ I.e. they identified what really was the symptoms of an illness as a demon.

⁸⁷ O'Meara, *Michaeli Pselli*, p. 163.

⁸⁸ Allatios actually says the 'octave of Christ's birth'. Sunday was both the first and the eighth day of the week. The second celebration fell on the same day as the first and 'sealed' the celebration. See A. Sharf, 'The Eighth Day of the Week', in J. Chrysostomides (ed.), *Kathegetria: Essays Presented to Joan Hussey on her 80th Birthday*, Camberley: Porphyrogenitus, 1988, p. 38.

Suidas also mentions *babutzikarios*: ‘It is *ephialtes*,⁸⁹ which is an exhalation caused by greed and indigestion, which rushes to the head. By doctors it is called *ephialtes*, by the common people *babutzikarios*.⁹⁰ However, the *babutzikarios* of *Suidas* is quite different from that of *Psellos* which we now call *kallikantzaros*. This sickness that *Suidas* mentions, *Psellos*, as we see below, calls *varychna*.⁹¹ Since *ephialtes*, (141) does not attack men [only] during the week of Christ’s birth but at any time, I do not doubt that *Psellos* has confused the names, which in that author is not surprising since he was always seeking abstruse matters and bringing new things to our attention. In these matters it is very easy for the memory to slip.

Nevertheless, the common herd of men is so stupid that they are not afraid to allege that anyone born during that week, is possessed by the devil, in such a way that he seems [to them] to have been born only to bring harm to others and to himself. Then during that week, such a man is sent forth from his own house and, beside himself, he wanders through the night, having no fixed abode, but always with the pace of Pegasus, and devouring the road as if somebody pursued him, he keeps on running. He never rests, [becoming] rude and savage. When he sees a man, he cruelly rips him to pieces with sharp and curving talons which he never cuts, seeking the face and tearing with his mouth. Then leaping on his shoulders, he weighs him down and crushes him. When he has rendered him semi-conscious, he asks, ‘στοῦπος ἢ μόλυβδος’, ‘Rope or lead?’ If he replies ‘rope’, he does not strike him further, but, leaping down on to the earth, he quickly seeks another whom he can afflict. If he says ‘lead’, then he crushes him with a burden more than strength can withstand. He leaves him half dead after tormenting him with his talons and goes on his way.

In order to distract a man from a similar delusion and offer him some consolation during this season, they present him with a sieve and instruct him to count the holes. He begins to count earnestly and intelligently and when he arrives at two he resumes

⁸⁹ i.e. *ephialtes* is also known as a nightmare. This helps to make sense of the passage in chapter XX, p. 162 text.

⁹⁰ *Suidas*, vol. 1, p. 486, no. 3909.

⁹¹ I.e. the symptoms of greed and indigestion are referred to as *ephialtes* by *Suidas* and *varychna* by *Psellos*. For *Psellos*’ account of the *varychna* see chapter XIX, p. 162.

counting from the first number, always repeating 'one, two,' and he does not add three at any time as if to him it were a bad omen. If anyone who is present suggests it, in no way does he change that manner of speaking and repeats 'one, two'. They call a similar pest, 'Καλλικάντζαρος', 'kallikantzaros', but where he gets the name from I do not yet know.

XI (141) Hence proverbs circulate among them. When they see someone who is always dressed the same, they say, 'Βάλλε τίποτε καινούριο άπάνω σου δια τούς καλλικαντζάρους'. 'Put on something brand new, at least on account of the kallikantzaroi.' Be sure to wear some new piece of clothing, lest your torn and worn out clothing means you fall prey to the kallikantzaros, if for no other reason, at least to defend yourself from the kallikantzaros. Also, in this way, when they catch sight of someone of unsound mind, they say, **(142)** 'Εκατέβης από τὰ τριποτάματα. δέν πᾶς εἰς τὰ τριποτάματα'. 'You have come down from Tripotamata. Surely you are going to Tripotamata?' Tripotamata is a place on the island of Chios, wooded and inaccessible, and never visited by any man, but always infested with ghostly spectres; where it is rumoured that these kallikantzaroi congregate, and linger and they display their craftsmanship. Therefore [the inhabitants of Chios] dismiss the apparently absurd, inane and delirious as men of a similar sort. They say that the stupid and the absurd come down here from that place.

Many carry away children born on the day sacred to the birth of Christ, lest they become kallikantzaroi. After seizing them by the feet, [they carry them] to the [fire] burning in the square. They bear them in their arms and holding their heels firmly in their hands, they thrust the soles of their feet into the fire. They allow these to be scorched in this way until the infant, half burned by fire, with tears and screams seeks pity from those holding him. Afterwards, they smear them with oil and apply a remedy, which they themselves know. They consider that the heat of the fire pares their nails: unarmed, with these removed, no one turns into a kallikantzaros.

XII (142) And these [creatures] seem to be bearable, with the exception of the *urkulaka* (vampire). Some call it *vulkolakka*, others *vuthrolaka*. Indeed nothing can be devised that is more frightful or dangerous to the human race. The name is indicative of foulness. ‘*Βούρκα*’ [vourka] is a swamp; not any swamp, but one which now oozes foul water giving a very bad odour- Mephitis, as I will call it. ‘*Λάκκος*’ [Lakkos] is a ditch or cave, which harbours mud of a similar kind. The *urkulaka* is indeed the corpse of the most evil and criminal of men: often one excommunicated by his bishop. It does not [behave] like the interred remains of the corpses of the dead [which] dissolve and turn into dust, but as if preserved by the strength of its skin it swells up in all its parts and is distended so that it is scarcely possible to bend any of its joints. The skin [is] stretched like a drum, and makes a noise in the same way as a drum if it is struck. Wherefore it is said to be ‘*τυμπανιαῖος*’ [‘*tympaniaios*’].⁹²

A demon enters a body deformed in this way, and spawns misfortune for wretched mortals. For often, after coming out of the grave in the form of that corpse and while travelling around, through the city and other inhabited places - and especially at night - it frequents any house it pleases and, with the door thrown open, addresses the inhabitants of the house in a loud voice. If the man replies, it means that he is done for, and will die the next day. If he does not reply, he is safe.

(143) Hence all the citizens on that island, if they are called by another at night, never reply the first time because if one is addressed a second time, now [one knows that] he who inquires is not a *urkulakka*, but someone else. They say that this pest is so deadly to mortals that it also attacks passers-by during the day - and at midday itself - not only inside the house but in the fields and on the open road and in the vineyards. He does not kill only with words and by contact, but destroys with his gaze and appearance alone.⁹³ If the men who see it speak to it, the spectre disappears; but he who spoke [to it] dies.

⁹² I.e. drum like, and derived from ‘*τύμπανος*’, a drum.

⁹³ These categories: words, contact and gaze which relate to the ways in which the *vrikolakas* can cause death are very similar to Zacchias’ discussion of the different mechanisms of poison. See Zacchias, *Quaestiones*, p. lib. II tit ii q xiii, n1-3, p. 188-189; bk II tit. 1, no 30, p. 150.

Therefore, when the citizens see men dying in their multitudes from no virulent disease, suspecting what [the cause is], they open the tombs in which the recently dead were buried. Sooner or later, they discover a corpse still undecayed and swollen. When they have removed it from the grave and a priest has delivered prayers over it, they throw it on to a burning pyre; and with the prayers not yet concluded, the joints of the corpse gradually dissolve. The remains turn into ash when they are burnt.

Others believe that the devil assumes the shape of a dead man and in that guise destroys whoever he wishes. Not only the [pious men] of ancient times (for this belief is neither newly arrived nor born in Greece today), but also of more recent times who are known to be Christian, have tried to root out this superstition. A *nomocanon* of uncertain author, who claims to have excerpted the following from [John] the Faster,⁹⁴ chapter 52⁹⁵ states:

(144) *‘Concerning a dead man, if he is found whole - which they call vulkolaka; if what they say about it is true and what should be done [about it]. Taken from the Faster⁹⁶ [chapter 52].’⁹⁷*

The dead man will not become a vulkolaka but the devil, desiring to deceive someone or other carries out these evil wonders for the purpose of bringing about disharmony, so that [the people] incur the wrath of God. At night he often places in the minds of some men [a belief] that a dead man comes up to those whom he recognised from before and conversed with them.⁹⁸ And they see other ghosts in waking dreams. At another time they see him on the road, either walking, or standing still, and not only this alone, but also strangling men.

⁹⁴ John the Faster, or John IV Nesteutes, Patriarch of Constantinople (582-595) supposedly composed a number of *nomokanones* and penitentials. This attribution is spurious, as even the earliest of the works dates from the end of the ninth century. The confusion was probably aided by the name John, monk and deacon on some of the manuscripts. These works mark an important move away from public penance with a more lenient approach towards the penitent. This extract, and the others below, do not occur in any of the earlier texts and shows how the attribution to the Faster remained even when new chapters were added.

⁹⁵ The chapter number is only given in the Greek.

⁹⁶ This is the title of the section of the *nomocanon*.

⁹⁷ This appears in the Greek, but not in the Latin translation.

⁹⁸ Allatios has *eo* rather than *iis* here, but the Greek and the sense of the sentence indicate that it should be a plural.

Oh, the stupidity of pitiful men! Does he who is dead walk among and kill the living? This is impossible! Nevertheless, men are [easily] confused and hurry to the grave and dig it up, to look at that corpse. And, since they are lacking in pure faith, the devil is transformed and puts on the corpse of the dead man as if a piece of clothing. And that corpse, which has lain for such a time, dead in the tomb appears to them having flesh and blood and nails and hair. When those wretched men see it in their imagination, they hasten to the evil [body] and pile up wood and (145) build a fire. They burn that corpse and destroy it completely. The fools do not see that their punishment in that eternal and inextinguishable fire is already prepared for them in the terrible second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that they will burn for all eternity. They burn that corpse and destroy it in the present time, but in future time, namely on the day of judgement, they will give account of all such things before the terrible judge and they will hear from him their condemnation to go into the fire and be punished for all eternity. If, therefore, they repent with all their heart for this great wickedness which they have carried out, if they are lay people they should remain without communion for six years; if they are priests, they should be entirely deprived of their priesthood.

Truly let it be known, when a similar corpse is found which is the work of the devil, as we have said, let the priest give voice and pray to the Virgin and perform a lesser benediction of the water. Then say Mass and exalt the Panagia to the aid of all and commemorate the dead with kolyva.⁹⁹ Afterwards read the exorcisms of the Great Basil over that body and the two exorcisms of Baptism. Then, finally, sprinkle all the people who are present with water blessed by a lesser benediction. Pour what is left of the water on the corpse and with the grace of God, it will drive away the demon from that corpse.¹⁰⁰

XIII (145) In these words there are certainly many details worth considering. Although it may be true that the dead never become *vulkolaka*, that in fact the

⁹⁹ A wheat mixture eaten at the funeral.

¹⁰⁰ This prescription appears in many *nomokanones*, many of which are attributed to anel Malaxos. (For a list of chapter headings of these *nomokanones* see X. A. Sideridas, 'Περὶ τινός ἀντιγράφου', 182-205 or Zacharia von Lingenthal, 'Die Handbücher des geistlichen Rechts aus den Zeiten des untergehenden byzantinischen Reichs und der türkischen Herrschaft', *Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences*, VIIe série, Saint-Petersburg vol. 28 (1881), 1-45. The above passage is almost identical to that in an unpublished codex by an unknown copier f45v-47v, reproduced in Mouzakis, *Οἱ βρικόλακες*, pp. 73-74.

phantasm is composed of the body of a dead man and a demon, nevertheless, you cannot deny that very often the souls of the dead are thrown into a place hateful to them, like a prison, for the purpose of enduring torments prescribed by God [in those cases] where they had heinously held God in contempt during their life. More often they also discharge their punishments in their own bodies [rather than in their souls alone]. Wherefore it will not be absurd, God so permitting, for the souls of such men to be forced into their own bodies, which divine power preserves in that foul state, so that first they will be punished in [their bodies and] then, afterwards, the servants of divine wrath [i.e. the *Vulcolaces*] also rage against others.

They say they do not perceive the body, which men see and destroy with fire, either by imagination or through a phantasm¹⁰¹ (to quote the author [of the *nomocanon*]), since they really gaze at the true body of the deceased and lay that man on the fire for cremation. Nor are those who believe [these erroneous opinions] judged worthy of penitence and punishments as the author [of the *nomocanon*] wrongly asserts. In this way, the demon is also able to fashion a body for himself from any matter he pleases and in the likeness of whomsoever [he pleases], to the extent that he who sees the ghost will even **(146)** confirm on oath that he has seen a true image of the man placed before him. What he sees does not actually exist, but is only/something fabricated by a demon. He is also able to seize the body of a dead man with very little effort and by possessing it is able to wander this way and that as if it were his own body. Through that body he can do the things which the body would be able to do if it were alive, although not those things which they call the vital functions. Who therefore is so stupid as to deny that the devil is able to drag from the grave the swollen and fetid body of the *vulkolaka*, and, by making it walk, can predict/foretell misfortune to mortals and bring harm when he is able to change himself into the Angel of Light?¹⁰² Wherefore, the devil, lurking secretly within, is able to convey

¹⁰¹ Here Allatios translates the Greek 'κατά φαντασίαν' twice; firstly with 'imaginatione', as he does in the translation of the relevant text (see p. 144 lines 37-38. For the Greek see p. 144 line 2) and then with 'secundum fantasian'. 'Fantasian' is merely a transliteration of the Greek and perhaps he feels the latter phrase provides a more literal translation.

¹⁰² Lucifer was incorrectly identified with Satan by the Church Fathers, although the name originally applied to the morning or evening star, Venus.

and conduct the body [working] through the soul of the dead, and appear to those travelling through the town and country, or to whoever he pleases: those who he knows will soon die through some illness - sometimes even infecting them with that poisonous breath of the corpse. In this way, with divine consent, he speeds up death. Afterwards, when [the body] has been cremated by fire, or removed from the power of the devil with other rituals and dissolved, the instrument having been destroyed, the power of the devil dependent on it also vanishes.

In those cases where they perceive something similar, they do not act wickedly if they investigate graves until, having found the corpse, they bring it into the middle of the city and after blessing it with prayers, commit it to the fire to be consumed. For when the prayers are pious and devised by pious men - [prayers] which the writer [of the *nomokanon*] does not reject - they should in no way be prohibited. Nevertheless, one should feel differently about some other [prayers] with which certain fanatical men, much addicted to spells, [approach the corpse] - ‘Γητείας’ (*Geteias*) the Greeks call them (as I suspect having been corrupted from the word ‘γοητεία’ [*goeteia*]) in which many evil things are introduced. What is more execrable, [is that] among these same prayers there are many crazy things devised by their brains, or rather at the suggestion of the devil. In order that the body of the *vulkolaka* stands upright while the prayers are recited, they support it with wooden staves. When it falls into the fire, they place three bricks under its head in a certain way. They also carry out other more secret things which are known to them alone. Indeed, just as it is the height of prudence to prohibit these things entirely and to eliminate [them] from the society of men by very serious punishments, so it is the greatest madness to deny that similar uncorrupted bodies are sometimes discovered in tombs and that by using them, if God permits, the devil devises harmful things against the human race.

(147) There are worthy witnesses, who claim to have witnessed [the following]: once long dissolved bodies are consigned on the prayers of Christians to the flames, their skeletons disintegrate before the fire has burnt itself out and turn to ashes so that

no longer did that body, or demon in the shape of the body, or in another form similar to it, rave against men.

It is related by Crusius in *Turco-Graecia*, book 8, that a Turk on the Saturday of Pentecost burnt a Greek who had died two years previously because the masses believed that it left the grave at night and killed men.¹⁰³ Others, however, alleged that the true reason is that fifteen men or more, seeing his ghost, died. When he was taken out of the grave, he was found intact with the skin clinging to the bones although the flesh had been consumed. And perhaps it was no different from what Nikephoros Patriarch of Constantinople related in his '[History] of Constantine Copronymos':¹⁰⁴

*'Such was the magnitude of fear that, out of their minds, they saw various visions and images and they imagined they met strangers and deformed men, whom they greeted as known to them, and fulfilled their customary obligations. They recounted these same things, as is customary, to those who met them by turn on the road. Those people were disturbed by these or those ghosts and the majority struck each other with drawn swords.'*¹⁰⁵

And Theophanes¹⁰⁶ puts it more clearly:

'Many of these men, out of their minds, thought that they were travelling with certain foreigners of fierce countenance. Meeting them, they addressed them as though friends and spoke with them. When he had noted what was said by them, they related them at length, since the event had now confirmed these things. However, they saw some enter the

¹⁰³ Allatius is mistaken. This passage actually occurs in the notes to book VII. Martin Crusius, *Turcograeciae libri octo*, Modena, Italy: Memori, 1973. (Facsimile reprint of the 1584 Basle edition), p. 490.

¹⁰⁴ Nikephoros I Patriarch of Constantinople (806-815). He was born in Constantinople c 775 and died 828 in the Monastery of St Theodore near Chrysopolis. He had a troubled patriarchate, and was exiled after failing to sign the iconoclast decrees. Nikephoros' history covers more than the reign of the Emperor Constantine V (741-775), nicknamed Copronymos (dung-named) by his iconophile enemies because he was rumoured to have defecated while being baptised. The work runs from 602-769, and so considers the same subject matter as the *Chronographia* of Theophanes.

¹⁰⁵ Nikephoros, *Short History*, Chs 6-7, pp 138-9.

¹⁰⁶ Theophanes (760-818) was a monastic chronicler who lived at the monastery he founded on the sea of Marmara, until he was imprisoned and then exiled for his opposition to Iconoclasm. He died in exile in Samothrace and was later canonised. His chronicle covers the period 285-813.

*house and hang [the people] inside, others kill with swords. The events showed most things they said were true.*¹⁰⁷

Kedrenos excerpts his chronicle from Theophanes.¹⁰⁸

So that I do not pile up more things here; as a boy myself in Chios, **(148)** I helped pupils of grammar at the school of Michael Neurides, a young man with the most exquisite manners, in the church of Saint Anthony.¹⁰⁹ Near the door by which you go into the pleasant garden, [just] on the left as you go out near the very steps by which one ascends, a grave, which had been shut for a very long time, was thrown open, if I remember well, in order to add a new corpse. Above the other bones of the dead lay a corpse, perfect in all its parts, of a colossal size, its clothes consumed by time or damp, its skin stretched, blackish, hard and so swollen through all its parts that the body did not lie flat but was as round as a small bag. The face covered in hair, black and curly; thin, scattered hairs on the head, just like the rest of the corpse which was hairless wherever one looked; arms stretched out by that swelling in the shape of a cross and with hands opened, eyelids closed, mouth gaping, teeth white and glistening.

When the pupils of the school saw it, they saw something to fear, to flee from, to wonder at, to run to, to talk about; more they refused to see. Later, made bold by the encouragement of other adults, they stood on the edge of the grave, prodded it with wooded staves, tried to move it and played other games which boys have a taste for. Then they also started to throw stones. When they saw that they did not stick as to something soft, but rebounded noisily as from something solid, they also threw down their balls. Those thrown accurately returned to the hand which threw them. Those sent with greater force flew back over the heads of the boys. Forgetting their fear, the boys searched for greater objects. Large timbers, which lay on the ground for

¹⁰⁷ Theophanes, *Chronographia*, pp. 112-113.

¹⁰⁸ Georgios Kedrenos was a twelfth-century historian about whom very little is known. His chronicle covers the period from the creation of the world to 1057, and as Allatios notes, much of it is based on chronicles of other historians: Symeon Magistros, George Hamartolos, and John Skylitzes as well as Theophanes.

¹⁰⁹ This church is no longer extant.

sitting on in the garden, were brought and thrown point first though the mouth of the tomb down on to the belly of the dead man. They did not break the skin but, as if rebounding from a drum, bounced back out. Only by being careful did those who threw them avoid being crushed under their weight. Others ran from all directions from the surrounding area and from almost the whole town, because the story had now spread by word of mouth. Young people with exceptional strength precipitated themselves head long from the tomb and striking the belly with their feet rebounded back from the grave. It was [a leap of] almost fifteen palms,¹¹⁰ and the truly horrid and wretched thing became a sport because the adults did nothing. When they threw their whole body on the corpse like a ball, they were expelled with the impetus derived from the corpse itself. Many threw themselves without sufficient care and came back on the wrong trajectory with the result that they banged their heads on the same edge of the tomb or on the vaulted opening and lay half conscious, spread-eagled inside the tomb.

I will not say any more here. After three days the curators of that church closed the grave in order to remove the Bacchanal from that church. What was done with that corpse, I do not know, and I did not inquire from others. Truly it was amazing that the skin still remained unharmed and in good condition with so many blows, which would not have been possible either for buffalo skin or even a stone arch: so hard had it become.

XIV (149) When the Greeks see similar bodies, which are discovered after death in cemeteries, undecayed and swollen, with skin stretched like a drum, they say that [these] are the bodies of the excommunicated and that after absolution these bodies are immediately dissolved. The same *nomocanon* relates concerning those excommunicated by bishops, and [those] who are found undecayed after death, in chapter 80: [entitled]

¹¹⁰ A palm was about 3 inches or 7.5 centimetres long. Fifteen palms therefore would be 3ft 9 in. or 1.125 metres.

[*Concerning the excommunicates, those who bishops excommunicate and their bodies are found undissolved after death.*]¹¹¹

(150) *Certain bishops excommunicated the men justly, rationally and legitimately, as transgressing the divine laws. They died on that day under excommunication and did not repent¹¹² in their lifetime to obtain absolution. They buried them and not long after their corpses were found dissolved and bones had been separated from bones.*

Reply: O what a wonderful thing! This is terrible and indeed astonishing: since a bishop excommunicated them lawfully, by what reason are their bodies not found intact and undissolved in the same way as other bodies of excommunicates are seen to this day? These things are extremely astonishing and terrible. In truth our Lord spoke: whatever you bind on earth, they are bound.¹¹³ But this exceeds all astonishment, that he who is excommunicated legitimately, after death is found with a dissolved body and with all parts separated.

The solution of the holy fathers: he who is justly and rationally and lawfully excommunicated by his bishop and after death is discovered dissolved, has no hope of salvation; not because he has transgressed the divine laws; but because he omitted to repent and failed to perform penance and to obtain forgiveness of his sins from the bishop by whom he had been excommunicated. For this reason he is found dissolved: he no longer has a hope of obtaining pardon because he is already participating in never ending punishment.

Those who truly are found excommunicated, that is, those whose bodies remain undissolved and intact, need absolution to set them free from the bonds of excommunication. For just as the body is found bound on earth, so also his soul is bound and is punished through the power of the devil. When the body has been absolved and loosed from excommunication, God so willing, his soul is set free from the shackles of the devil and may partake of eternal life, of the never fading light, and the joy which cannot be expressed by words.

Hear from the same author in more detail and no less ineptly: chapter 81.

(151) *Concerning the dead: if his body is discovered intact and entirely without hair:*

¹¹¹ This occurs in the Greek, although Allatios omits it from his Latin translation.

¹¹² '*Resipiscencia*', the noun from '*resipisco*', has the meaning 'repentance'.

¹¹³ Matthew 18:18. See also the definitive statement in Matthew 16: 19-20.

Know about these - if the corpse is discovered intact in the grave and entirely without hair, one can doubt and hesitate whether or not that man has been excommunicated. Nevertheless, that corpse should be dragged from that grave in which it lay and placed in another. When a considerable time has elapsed, if that corpse dissolves, it is good. If it remains undissolved, know that it is excommunicated and is in need of absolution in order to set him free from the bonds of excommunication.'

If you are not disgusted by these things, there are many things about the excommunicate available to distinguish it after death from others who have been excommunicated. The same author notes it from a manuscript in St Sophia, chapter 78: [entitled]¹¹⁴

'[Concerning the excommunicate, that it is known after his death by whom he is excommunicated. All these things [concerning] excommunicates are found in a book of Hagia Sophia.]

If anyone is bound by an oath or curse, he will have the front parts of his body intact. If anyone is under anathema, he appears yellow and with his fingers clenched. He who is truly very white has been excommunicated by holy laws. [Above he tells and shows by whom the excommunicated man was excommunicated.]¹¹⁵ And what the excommunication of priests may be, he does not explain.¹¹⁶

XV (151) That very foolish superstition concerning the undissolved corpses of the excommunicated grew so much stronger among that people that there is now no one who doubts that, if anything like this is discovered anywhere, it is the corpse of an excommunicate. They [therefore] drag it out [from the grave] and absolve it with various prayers and ritual formulas. (The same *nomocanon* in chapter 82 exactly follows the order observed in such an absolution.) They earnestly assert that as a result of the performance of these [rituals] the corpse is immediately turned to dust. I have seen no such thing myself anywhere in Greece. However, I have heard quite

¹¹⁴ Once again, Allatios fails to translate the title into Latin.

¹¹⁵ Allatios fails to translate this from the Greek.

¹¹⁶ Compare the account of this manuscript given by Richard, *Relation*, p. 225-226. He says that he found it in the church of Hagia Sophia at Thessaloniki.

often from Athanasios, metropolitan of Imbros, an honest man, and one who would not contaminate factual things with lies [the following tale].¹¹⁷ When he was staying in Ihasi, in the region of Ephesos, outside the city in the church of St George, he was persuaded by the citizens to recite an absolution for excommunication over the corpses, which were very frequently observed there undissolved. He complied with custom, and all the corpses **(152)** dissolved into dust, with the absolution not yet completed.

The same man [i.e. Athanasios, metropolitan of Imbros] also tells of a certain Constantine, [going] by the nickname of Rezepios, who had joined the Christians from the Turks. Excommunicated because he lived an evil life full of shameful acts, his body was buried in the church of the Saints Peter and Paul of the Greek nation at Naples, and remained undissolved for many years. Later, when it was exposed to the blessing of the same man [Athanasios, metropolitan of Imbros] and two other metropolitans, Athanasios of Cyprus and Chrysanthos of Lacedaemonia, it was turned to dust, like other corpses of the dead.¹¹⁸

And what is more astonishing, is the allegation made by the same [metropolitan] to the effect that, while Raphael was presiding in the Patriarchate,¹¹⁹ somebody excommunicated another but then, being under the compulsion of the devil, denied Christ, with the result that the corpse of the dead, excommunicated Christian remained undissolved. When the patriarch had confirmed the fact, he summoned the Turk [i.e. the renegade] who had cast the excommunication and advised him to grant absolution. At first the Turk refused to lift the ban. He said that the Turks have nothing in common with the Christian religion. Therefore [only] a Christian should absolve a Christian. But when he was exhorted more persistently, he obeyed and recited the absolution over the excommunicate - the man who was telling this

¹¹⁷ A similar story appears in Angelos, *De statu*, p. 523.

¹¹⁸ A similar story is also contained in George Abbot, *Macedonian Folklore*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903, p. 211. The author is told a story of the Bishop of Thessaloniki, who apostatised and later became head Mullah. It differs from the story above in that he was allowed to lift the excommunication without returning to Christianity having obtained permission from the Pasha.

¹¹⁹ Raphael II (1603 Feb -1607 Oct 1/15).

claimed that he was an eye witness. Near the end of the absolution the swelling of the corpse subsided and everything was turned to ashes. Terrified by this strange occurrence, the Turk hastened swiftly to a magistrate, [and] related this event as it had happened. He declared to everyone that Christianity was the true religion which he had deserted out of the depths of wickedness, that he embraced it again, [and] that he denounced Islam. He was advised by the Turks to be sensible, lest he exposed himself to torture. He maintained that he wanted to die a Christian. What more? They condemned the stubborn man. He was lead to his execution and was executed proclaiming the Christian religion, martyred in great torment.

XVI (152) Christophoros Angelos relates very many things about these excommunicates in his *De Vita et Moribus Recentiorum Graecorum* chapter 25. I shall not omit what he extracts from the history of Cassian:

(153) *'However, this is the argument. This man Cassian is an ancient Greek Historian, and he relates in his histories that once a local synod of one hundred bishops came together in a certain place and, with one exception, all came to a correct decision. Then they struck [this] bishop with an anathema and thus he ended his life under excommunication, and his corpse remained bound for one hundred years, as if it were iron. After one hundred years another local synod of one hundred bishops was assembled in the same place and the bishops said among themselves: 'A bishop struck by anathema sinned against the church and the church excommunicated him. We are also the church and we forgive him, since it is human to sin.' Thus they absolved him. With the completion of the prayers, he who had remained undissolved for one hundred years disappeared into dust.'*¹²⁰

One can also read in Manuel Malaxos¹²¹ *Historia Patriarchum Constantinopolitanorum*, about Arsenios, bishop of Monemvasia:

*'But consumed by the bitterness of his mind, he died under excommunication without performing penance.'*¹²² *Some time later his*

¹²⁰ Angelos, *De statu*, p. 524. I have been unable to trace this excerpt from Cassian.

¹²¹ Manuel Malaxos, the sixteenth-century historian and canonist, was a notary for the metropolitan of Thebes but by 1577 had moved to Constantinople, where he died in 1581.

*wretched corpse was discovered, completely black [and] swollen like a drum, to such an extent that all who saw it were afraid and trembled.*¹²³

Concerning Ioannikos the Patriarch of Constantinople:¹²⁴

*'And not long after, the evil man died badly and with suffering and bound by anathema. He was discovered swollen like a drum. Sometime or other he had been stripped of the community of the church by four patriarchs on account of his iniquity. Thus this wretched man was given the punishments that he merited.'*¹²⁵

[Malaxos] confirms it with the example of a certain woman, who was placed under excommunication by the Patriarch Gennadios,¹²⁶ on account of the false accusation she brought against the patriarch. When she was removed from the grave, swollen and black, she was absolved from excommunication after various prayers and disappeared into dust with all her parts dissolved. However, Malaxos relates this event as it happened long-windedly in the same history. We judge, for this reason, that it will not be unprofitable **(154)** to explain how this thing turned out in the words [of my] translation [without quoting the original Greek].¹²⁷

*'Among the rest of the things which they pointed out to [the sultan] they also said this.'*¹²⁸

[Concerning] those who bishops and priests of the Christian people lawfully expel from the community of the faithful because of any sin committed, who while they are alive did not receive correction to purify them of that fault, on account of which they were thrown out: the corpses

¹²² At this point Allatios omits a sentence from the Greek text of Angelos: 'καὶ ὑπῆγεν ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ ὅπου τοῦ Νεστορίου τοῦ ἀίρετικοῦ καὶ τῶν ἐπιλοίπων': 'and his soul followed that of Nestorius the heretic and the others'.

¹²³ Manuel Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica Constantinopoleos*. Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae, Immanuel Bekker (ed.), Bonn: E. Weber, 1849, p. 149. The work covers the period 1454-1578, and was published for the first time in the *Turcograecia* of Martin Crusius.

¹²⁴ Ioannikos held the patriarchate illegitimately, probably during the spring of 1526 during the absence of Jeremias I (1522 Dec 31 -1545 end).

¹²⁵ Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, p. 157-8. On the authorship of this text see my note introduction, p. 43, n. 167.

¹²⁶ Gennadios II Scholarios held the position of patriarch on three successive occasions: 1) 1454 Jan 6 -1456 Jan 6; 2) 1462 prob sum -1463 summer; 3) 1464 Aug- 1465 July.

¹²⁷ This is a paraphrase rather than a translation of the text.

¹²⁸ This refers to Sultan Mehemet II (1451-1481).

of those dead do not dissolve into the ground but remain inflated like a drum and will not be consumed totally by the earth even if one hundred years pass by, but remain intact in the way they were buried.

He asked further, whether, on the other hand, the same [bishops] were able to make those bodies dissolve when absolution was performed. They replied that they could. He, hearing this wonderful thing, was astonished, shivered, and did not ask anything more of this, but immediately ordered it to be made known to the patriarch that he should seek a person, now long dead, who had been cut off from the church.¹²⁹ When he received the messenger, the patriarch was terrified and immediately explained the words of the sultan to the clerics he had summoned. They were astonished. The patriarch, along with the clerics, was sorely troubled. He racked his brains [as to] where they might find such a corpse of someone excommunicated a long time previously. Since at this time they had no idea what to do, they sought a few days grace from the king to look around. This was granted and turning things around in their minds they thought about [where to find] such a corpse. Finally, certain senior clerics remembered that at the time of Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios, there was a certain widow of a priest, an outstandingly beautiful woman, who had the house outside the Patriarchate and made a profit by openly prostituting her body. When he learned of this matter, the patriarch rebuked her, reminding her very diligently that she should make an end of her sinning. After she had performed repentance for it, forgiveness would follow. But it was in vain, because the woman, relaxing her morals still further, urged herself on to lustful pleasures. The patriarch, meanwhile, did not stop chiding and scolding, not only in private but also openly, publicly, in the presence of courtiers and officers and clergy of the church.

That miserable woman, incited by the devil, accused the patriarch of trying to force her into evil deeds when he called her to a secret meeting. When he heard the unworthy accusation of dreadful crime, he was totally astounded. This calumny spread around the whole of Constantinople and throughout the neighbouring area: some believed it to be true, others disputed its trustworthiness. What was the patriarch to do? His only remedy was this: on a particular feast of the Lord, after calling the bishops and clergy, he performed the Liturgy. When he had finished it, he said in a very loud voice, that if those words which the priest's widow had said against him were true, he prayed that she would be pardoned by God for it and be given happiness, and that her body would be dissolved. (155) However, if she had falsely accused him, having made up a most unworthy charge, he would consign her to the will and judgement of the

¹²⁹ This refers to the Patriarch Maximos III Manasses, who held the patriarchate from the spring of 1476 to the end of 1481 or beginning of 1482.

omnipotent God, having banished her from the holy flock of the pious, deprived of forgiveness and [with her body] indissoluble. So things rested with him. Nor was the divine revenge stayed for long. But oh, what a miraculous thing: dysentery carried her off within forty days. The corpse of the very wicked woman, now dead and buried, did not dissolve. However, it remained unconsumed and intact, just as it was when it was interred. Not even the hairs of her head had fallen out in any way. Truly she remained exactly like some living woman, except that she did not speak.

Nevertheless, many years had passed since she had been condemned to excommunication. I tell you, the clerics remembered this woman who was still held, constrained by the bonds of excommunication. They knew for certain that this extremely wicked woman had laid a false accusation against that Patriarch Gennadios. Therefore, when they assembled together they said publicly that they knew the woman had been excommunicated by the just sentence of the Patriarch Gennadios. Having heard this, the Patriarch Maximos ordered them to seek the place where the corpse was buried and to find the excommunicate, so that when they opened the tomb they might inspect it and confirm these things. They were sent to look. When the tomb was found, the patriarch rejoiced and immediately ran to it with his clergy, accompanied by the *tzausios*¹³⁰ of the king. Then, opening her tomb, they discovered the corpse preserved and uncorrupted. It was black and swollen like a drum. Whoever saw it was very afraid and wept for its wretchedness, terrified by the awful judgement of God on her and his condemnation.

Immediately the patriarch with the *tzausios* showed it to the servants, who ordered the excommunicated corpse to be examined in the name of the sultan. [The patriarch] said, "We have found such a thing. Send back a message to the king [to ask] what more he wishes to be done." When they heard this amazing thing, they came running and told the king. As soon as the king found out, he sent some faithful servants, who inspected [the corpse] and were greatly amazed. When they had returned to the sultan, they revealed to him the dreadful thing which they had seen. Then the sultan called certain courtiers to whom he gave his seal, ordering them to put the corpse in a certain place, to shut it up safely there and to seal it. As they left they were amazed by the appearance of the wretched corpse. They moved it to a certain chapel of the Pammakaristos,¹³¹ and sealed the coffin, in which the body was lying with the royal seal. Afterwards, they sought from the patriarch what was to become of the corpse and what reply they should take back to the

¹³⁰ A dignitary of the Ottoman Porte.

¹³¹ The Pammakaristos was the Church of Hagia Maria in Constantinople. It was the seat of the Greek Patriarch of Constantinople 1455-1587, when it was confiscated and turned into a mosque.

sultan; namely, at what future time it would be when the widow's dissolution and disintegration would be carried out, following the pardon from God. The patriarch replied, "I shall celebrate over her the rites, which are prescribed by us for excommunicates and (156) I shall recite the prayers which we have every day. When both [these things] have been completed, we recite what is written according to the Liturgy, by which the woman's sins are remitted. Then we will summon you so that you [can] carry away the body."

A few days later, the patriarch arranged her absolution and sent the messenger to his courtiers so that they would come and carry out the coffin of the corpse from the chapel where the Liturgy had been said over it. Immediately they arrived by the sultan's command and they carried out the coffin with the corpse lying inside, just as it had been sealed. Then the Liturgy was performed before a crowded throng of priests and deacons and all the Christian people. The patriarch stood up at the end of it, deeply moved, with many tears and recited the text of that absolution which he had written out with his own hand. Behold, then a great miracle from God! Behold, the divine mercy and the love which reaches out towards human kind! I say that the miracle is great and amazing and occurred at that hour through divine influence. As the patriarch was reading the absolution aloud, the joints of the body separated from one another and dissolved within the coffin - so much so that whoever was standing near it heard the cracking of bones, separating from one another [and] the whole body disintegrating while the joints were torn apart. The body of that miserable woman who had falsely accused the most holy patriarch was seeking forgiveness. Those who were standing by the coffin containing that excommunicated woman were moved to great astonishment at the sound of the tremendous miracle of the cracking bones as they broke away from each other, one by one, and they gave thanks to God with tears for producing great and amazing miracles.

When the Liturgy had been performed, raising the coffin with the body [inside], they put it back in that same chapel where it had been before. This [was carried out] by the decision and order of the courtiers, who were sent by the sultan. Once it had been placed inside, they closed the leaves [of the coffin] and bolted it and pressed it with the seal of the king because of the press of people. After a few days they removed the seal, [first] that with which the chapel had been sealed, then the one with which the coffin had been sealed and opened the lock with a key to discover that the corpse had dissolved and scattered in the coffin, at last vouchsafed mercy. At the sight of this miracle they were struck dumb by amazement. The courtiers ran to the king and went over the whole business of the corpse: for what reason she had been excommunicated,

by what reason she received a condemnation, why, finally, bone separated from bone. Hearing all this, the sultan was astounded beyond measure and was amazed at such a great miracle. "Indeed the Christian religion", he said, "is true without a doubt."¹³²

Indeed, the author of the *Historia Politica Constantinopolitanae* relates the same thing but more succinctly. However, these words of Malaxos should be considered more carefully.

*'Pardon and forgiveness do not affect the body alone but even the soul, set free from the torment of hell, comes into Paradise. (157) For those who are banished from the church after being anathematised are in need of absolution of the soul since their bodies remain undissolved and intact. They seek it in order to set them free from the bonds of excommunication. For just as their bodies are held fast and not consumed by the earth, so their souls are also bound shackles of the devil and are punished for being corrupt. When, however, the body receives forgiveness, after being set free from the bond of execration, with God's good help, the soul is also set free from the shackles of the devil and attains eternal life and that light which never knows the evening.'*¹³³

XVII (157) The author of the *nomocanon* had deceived us in similar absurd accounts, as we saw above, and now Malaxos plays a similar game.¹³⁴ To refute them with arguments does not seem to be worthwhile: we have said enough other things elsewhere and we have checked the errors of some of the Greeks who [claim] through the prayers of the faithful to set free souls, condemned to the sempiternal fires, from the punishments of hell.

But now, for reasons already given, I am not of a mind to confute depraved superstitions with reasons and the dogma of sound religion. Since I shall refer these opinions to Zacchias who discerns truth from falsity, possessed of intelligence and

¹³² Malaxos, *Historia patriarchica*, p. 118-124. See also Martin Crusius, who excerpts sections from the works of Malaxos in his *Turcograeciae*, ch IX, p. 131ff. Also quoted in Allatios, *De Purg.*, p0. 40-41.

¹³³ Malaxos, *Historia politica*, p. 48-50. Also quoted in Leo Allatios, *De Purg.*, p. 38.

¹³⁴ Allatios is either unaware or doubtful of the tradition which ascribes authorship of this *nomocanon* to Malaxos.

great and long experience of things, I propose that [the superstitions], whatever they are, should be examined by others.

XVIII (157) You may say the Greeks do not provide adequate proof that these undissolved bodies indicate that someone has been excommunicated because many other corpses are discovered intact in all their parts exactly as they were when living, even [those] of pious men and worshippers of God. [Indeed the Greeks themselves] do not despise [such corpses] as excommunicates, holding them [rather] in the greatest veneration as saints. They [even] propose to others of the faith that they should be venerated, taking immense pleasure if they stay uncorrupted for as long as possible. Manuel Kalekas¹³⁵ reproached them for this in *Contra Graecos* book IV: **(158)** when they told him that the Council of Lyons had been tyrannically imposed and also asserted that the still intact corpse of the one who brought it about, that is the Emperor Michael Paleologus, proclaims his evil soul because he forced such a council,¹³⁶ Kalekas replied:

‘Indeed, they judge though their senses concerning the faith: what they consider in others to be a sign of sanctity, whenever they want they interpret it as a judgement of damnation, as if God decrees according to their desire. Given that they consider it sign of sanctity that the corpses of the dead do not dissolve, what would they say about the bodies of Peter and Paul and of most of the saints which dissolved into pieces and into dust? If, however, they see the majority of bodies of saints dissolved, how can they prove that those who have not suffered it [are holy]? Moreover, what do they say of the infidel and those whom they place under a public curse whose bodies remain uncorrupted? Furthermore, if they judge these as signs of damnation, how do they honour the bodies of saints?’¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Manuel Kalekas, a late fourteenth century scholar was an opponent of Palamism and a disciple of Demetrios Kydones. He converted to Catholicism after spending time in Pera where he had fled to avoid persecution for his stance on the Palamite issue. The discussion below is a paraphrase of his ‘Adversos graecos’ in J. P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Latina*, vol. 152, 1866, col. 211.

¹³⁶ The Council of Lyons (1274) was called to discuss the question of the union of the churches. The Pope, Gregory X received the submission of the Greek church and with the union Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259-1282) hoped to ward off the threat of invasion from the West. This agreement was very unpopular in the East and when Michael VIII died he was refused an orthodox burial. The union was repudiated at the Council of Constantinople in 1285.

¹³⁷ Kalekas, ‘Adversos graecos’, col. 211 A 13-B 12.

[If you accuse them of this] the Greeks would reply that the corpses of the excommunicated are easily distinguished from those of pious men: corpses of the excommunicated swell up and are rigid and are stretched like a drumskin by a certain innate foulness and resound when struck. You never glimpse them without horror. [Corpses] of the pious [in contrast] rest in the same condition as when they were alive and are greatly to be revered for their appearance and beauty. Once you have kissed them you would willingly proceed to kiss the same bodies again, having been drawn into their devotion. They manifest in their very appearance the piety they cultivated [when alive], often also enticing the spectator to themselves with a pleasant fragrance. In this way there is the greatest difference between the corpses of the excommunicated and holy men.

XIX (158) But let us now leave the dead and turn [our discourse] to very beautiful women, who they call *ναπαγίδες*, which is a corruption of *νηρηίδες* 'nereides', as they should be called. The people call them 'καλὰς ἀρχόντισσας'; 'beautiful ladies'. They are those kinds of nymphs who live in the country and sometimes also come to town - they delight in solemn dancing and dancing in circles among very dense woods and charming valleys, especially if the ground is irrigated with water. They frequent the shade of the trees, especially at midday. They lust for the young men, but especially the most beautiful, and they rejoice in infants of both sexes. When they are able, they seize many of the more beautiful and give them back enriched with precious things but keep others with them and cherish them. Many assert that they have seen them, either when many are engaged in dancing together or when they are talking in pairs under a tree or also while wandering this way and that.

Men not unworthy of trust also say that, when, during the summer, sometimes they stayed with the rest of the family in the country, as citizens of the island are able and accustomed to do, a certain girl with a beautiful face, separated from family and friends, went running to the mouth of a near-by well. Through the folly of her

youth, as if another was leading her, she lay stretched alongside the well, and looking down into the water within, she was lifted gradually and secretly by a certain force and without her realising what [was happening] she was pushed into the well. The parents saw the abduction, ran, went around, [and] saw the girl on the water, playing as if sitting on a couch. Her father was bold enough to try climbing down into the well [and found himself] pushed below and was set down beside his daughter. Meanwhile, others brought ladders and put them into the well, urging her father to climb up. After snatching his daughter into his arms, he climbed up the ladder safely. And, what stirred the amazement of all [was that] although he and his daughter had stayed in the water for some time they climbed up with completely dry clothes and no sign of wetness. They attributed the seizure of the girl and her father to the *nereides*, pretending they had their dwelling in that well. The girl herself also said that while she was standing by the well, she had seen women playing on the water with the greatest delight and when invited by them, she had thrown herself into the well voluntarily.

Often also at midday, a handsome young man, or pretty little boy, deviates from the path for the sake of relaxation, while thinking about other things and immediately falls to the ground. He is [then] bent by a contraction of the nerves or his face is twisted, or one foot goes lame if not both, or he becomes like a hunchback, or is afflicted by another injury to the body. All are unanimous that the said women inflict such things on people who, lest they incur their hostility, do not use their names, and indicate the matter with a saying: ‘Ὡρα τὸν ἡῦρεν’.¹³⁸ ‘The [evil] hour has found him’ or ‘Ἀπὸ ἐξω ἔχει’.¹³⁹ ‘He’s away with the fairies’. Indeed the beautiful female warriors have transformed him and brought him into the deformed condition in which he is now seen.

¹³⁸ See Richard and Eva Blum, *Health and Healing in Rural Greece: A Study of Three Communities*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1965, pp. 112-113, on ‘the dangerous hour’.

¹³⁹ On the use of ἐξω and associated words in the context of the supernatural see Charles Stewart’s discussion of *exotika* in his *Demons*. On this concept in the west see also Gustav Henningsen, “The Ladies from the Outside”: An Archaic Pattern of the Witches’ Sabbath’ in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds.), *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, 191-215.

They are so sure [of their power] that, on other times when they see men slipping in their foul excrement while defecating [they believe] that it is possible that these [women] are sitting in the place where they are seeing to their bodily needs and cursing the business or bring misfortune on [such] men, which will not go away. [This is why] in the countryside, if they try anything similar, they do not do anything before first spitting three times on the ground. Wherefore they think that they avert so great an evil by the protection afforded by the spit.

They say, moreover, that when there are whirlwinds and everything behaves as if in a vortex, [the *nereides*] walk through those places at that time.¹⁴⁰ As we have now seen, they are almost always very harmful, except that when in love they make their lovers extremely powerful, rich and fortunate. Indeed these stupid things are superstitions of the common people.

What of Psellos then? Just as in other [cases], so with these, he attributes them to natural causes:

(161) *'The beautiful woman gave birth to a handsome boy [the beautiful of the mountains],¹⁴¹ without the contribution of a husband. For she who gave birth was a virgin, beautiful beyond others, with the beauty of virtue¹⁴² and he who was born is exceedingly handsome, beautiful beyond the sons of men. And, if you please, this name seems badly pronounced, for popular speech alters the pronunciation; since she should be called 'the beautiful maid of the mountains,'¹⁴³ popular speech has changed it into the 'beautiful [gave birth] to the handsome.'¹⁴⁴ Hence many suspect that she is a demon, who lingered in the mountains and [this belief] represents her quite stupidly as a wanderer and traveller through those mountains.¹⁴⁵*

¹⁴⁰ See Oikonomides, 'Η γελλῶ', 247.

¹⁴¹ 'ἡ καλὴ τὸν ὠραῖον'.

¹⁴² Allatios, curiously translates 'ἀρετὴ' ('τῶν ἀρετῶν') with 'cupido' ('cupidinum'), but the translation 'virtue' makes better sense of the passage than 'desire'.

¹⁴³ 'καλὴ τῶν ὀρεῶν'.

¹⁴⁴ 'ἡ καλὴ τὸν ὠραῖον'. It is very strange that Allatios chooses to translate this section into Latin, rather than leave it in the Greek. The sense of the passage depends on the identical pronunciation of two Greek phrases which have different meanings. Thus the Latin translation cannot convey the problem involved.

¹⁴⁵ This section suggests that instead it is 'καλὴ τὸν ὠραῖον' that is the correct phrase, for the popular belief expands on the idea of 'καλὴ τῶν ὀρεῶν', the beautiful lady of the mountains. This is

That is not it at all. But when, in the month of Sextilus - which the second Caesar Augustus called August after himself because he was born in it and carried home many victories - because of the rising of the dog star there occurs something like a fiery stream flowing from the heavenly bodies and on account of this we need much refreshment. Therefore, in this month we receive help from her, the beautiful Mother of God, and from the cross.¹⁴⁶ The cross truly is (Greek: has in its nature) the beauties of the mountains. For, in this way, it is related by the historical record¹⁴⁷ [that] it was constructed from the pine, cedar and cypress. And these are the same beauties as those which grow in the mountains; both because they grow green with thick foliage, and because they force themselves into the air to a great height. Therefore these arms bearing victory are called the beauties of the mountains.¹⁴⁸

This does not seem to be completely in disagreement with the belief that circulates about that woman Solominis, who gave birth to the Maccabees, renowned in battle. She [i.e wisdom] is the sister of she who produced the handsome son, that is to say the beauty of the mountains, that is to say, the cross. For, if this Solominis derived her name from the masculine name, and it was ascribed to that Solomon on the testimony of God, from his great wisdom, so that now, for him, this appellation [Wisdom] suffices instead of his proper name.¹⁴⁹ The word which is used in relation (looks towards knowledge) to science is 'solominis'.¹⁵⁰ (162) Wisdom, however, is true and therefore is the sister of the mother of our Lord and is related to the cross. For, if all understanding is through affinity, and if indeed the intelligible is grasped by the intellect, and the sensible by the senses, so, what is wise will also be grasped by wisdom.¹⁵¹ Through Solominis, therefore, we comprehend the mystery that it is possible to become like the wisdom above all wisdom of the beautiful Mother of God. For no other reason do we call the ineffable power of the cross and the knowledge embracing similar things, the sister of these which are understood.

confirmed by the fact that in the latter section of this passage, Psellos argues that the true beauty of the mountains is the cross.

¹⁴⁶ This refers to the day of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary on the 15th August and the Elevation of the Cross, which is celebrated on the 14th September.

¹⁴⁷ The Greek makes this tale much less important - not monumental history - could just be a story.

¹⁴⁸ i.e. the cross

¹⁴⁹ i.e. she can be called 'wisdom'. Wisdom was an appellation of Christ as well. (Prov 7:4) Call wisdom your sister, great Understanding as a familiar friend. See also christian dictionary and cormack writing in Gold.

¹⁵⁰ This is because 'scientia' or 'knowledge' is a feminine noun and Solominis is the feminine form of Solomon.

¹⁵¹ Greek: 'the wise will be grasped possessed by wisdom. See the same kind of idea in the Pseudo Dionysios, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchies*, 3:4, 480 A, p. 228-229, and above, Allatios, *De opin.*, ch. IV p.125. This is based on a Platonic idea. See Plato, *Republic*, 441c - 444a.

Therefore it is not some demon which is called Beauty of the Mountains. Neither is he who is said to be varychnas some demon, but a condition in the brain. It is born from those undigested vapours or from food which is difficult to digest. Doctors call the condition ephialtes. They assign the name from that which leaps up from below.¹⁵² For that which he exhales undigested from below, since it is something denser and more earthy, it lodges in the passages of the brain and blocks them. He who is so affected is entirely deprived of sense and movement and he who strikes with a sense of weight is popularly called varychnas.¹⁵³

XX (162) Here you see that Psellos only confuses these opinions of the common people with sicknesses which are generated thus in bodies. For what have *varychnas* or *babutzikarios* or even *ephaltes* to do with the beauty of the woods or the mountains? These [sicknesses] occur to men in bed, while those [phenomena] above: the *kallikantzaros*, the *burcolaca* or *nereids*, occur in fields, cross roads and on roads. The former [sicknesses] strike sleeping people, the latter [phenomena] those who are awake and moving around. These things (sicknesses) are seen everywhere and while common experience proves all, that immediately the sufferer is woken from sleep, he recovers from them. If the latter happen as the common people believe, they leave behind signs, impressed upon the human body, and are viewed by those who wish. I do not doubt that sometimes these things also know some natural causes, for many are undone by a visual impact or by a ghost which they say they have seen, or contract some disease of the body. But what have these matters to do with those things, which we have reviewed so far [originating in] the superstitions of the common people? Moreover, Psellos himself did not know that the Beautiful Lady of the Mountains is nothing other than those who the people call 'Beautiful Ladies', which are as far away as possible from *vrucolaca* and *ephaltes*. At last, however, from his *Dialogue on the Operation of Demons* he said of the same:

¹⁵² Psellos is discussing the relationship between the literal meaning of the word 'ephaltes' (εφιάλτης): 'one who leaps upon' and the name of the affliction.

¹⁵³ Psellos implies that the phenomenon takes its name 'varychnas' (βαρύχνας) from the word 'βαρύς': 'heavy', because of the heaviness it inflicts on people.

‘Those [demons] who live in damp places and are accustomed to a better way of life, turn themselves into birds and women. It may be that the Greeks call these nyads, nereids and dryads in the feminine gender.’¹⁵⁴

XXI (163) There is another kind of spirit besides this, which is often seen, [and] not in only one form in the domestic hearths, cellars, fields and wells, very often at night, rarely during the day. It appears sometimes as a serpent, lizard or some other reptile,¹⁵⁵ sometimes as a mannikin, most often of a very black hue.¹⁵⁶ They bring no harm to the inhabitants but only predict much good fortune. Hence, when such like creatures cross their path and it is not known what guise the spirit of that house takes, it is an outrage and a crime to treat them badly. [The inhabitants] give them the free run of the house, so that they may go wherever they wish: they do not persecute them nor disturb their passage. [The inhabitants] certainly do not kill or cause them injury [to the creatures]. They say that they have observed that if they brought trouble or killed [these creatures], greatest harm follows for that house through the death of the father or mother of the family or other relative; still more through the loss of household objects. Those who display an excessive credulity in such ridiculous things make a kind of cult of them [stopping short] of worshipping them.

They call this thing itself *στοιχεῖον* [*stoicheion*]; you would say ‘element’.¹⁵⁷ The name was derived by the magicians for the following reason. The *Testamentum Solomonis* [states]:

‘And I ordered that the demon be brought into my presence. And the assembled spirits with handsome features entered together. I myself, Solomon, was amazed and I asked, “Who are you?” and they all replied together with one voice, “We are those who they call elements

¹⁵⁴ Gautier, *De Daemonibus*, 169-170. In his *De Psellis* Allatios was doubtful of the attribution of this work to Michael Psellos on the grounds of style on content, but believed that the *Graecorum Opiniones de Daemonibus* ‘not yet edited’ should be ascribed to the same author as the *De Daemonibus*. See Allatios *De Psellis*, cols 483-484; 502.

¹⁵⁵ See ch. XXII, below, p. 167

¹⁵⁶ See ch XXII below, pp. 166-167.

¹⁵⁷ This is because of the connection of the spirits with the elements.

[στοιχεῖα], *Lords of the world of shadows; Self-deception, Discord etc.*”¹⁵⁸

Thus they were called because they are born in individual elements and linger there, and, as if a breath of life, give life to the components of the elements. Alcinous writes in *De Doctrina Platonis*, chapter 5:

*‘There are other demons whom someone may call quite aptly gods born in individual elements [στοιχεῖων], some visible, others invisible, in ether, fire, air, and water to such an extent that there is nothing in this universe which lacks a soul nor does it lack the natural life of the higher animals.’*¹⁵⁹

And not only demons themselves are called ‘elements’ [i.e. *stoicheia*], **(164)** but also things produced by magicians by the power of the magic arts whereby inanimate things govern the fortune or life of some man or other - from which [practice we also derive the words] ‘στοιχειοῦν’ [*stoicheioun*] and ‘στοιχειοῦσθαι’ [*stoicheiousthai*]. The magicians themselves who make similar things with particular signs and incantations are called ‘στοιχειωματικοὶ’ [*stoicheimatikoi*]. You also have ‘στοιχειωτικούς λόγους’ [*stoicheiotikous logous*].¹⁶⁰ There was in Xerolophos the statue of Simeon the Bulgarian, who perished when it was decapitated. To quote Kedrenos¹⁶¹ on ‘Romanos Lekapenos’.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ McCown, *Testament*, 8:1-4, p. 31-32, although Allatios’ text is not identical with any of the manuscripts examined by McCown. An English translation based on the eclectic text of McCown can be found Charlesworth, *Pseudepigrapha*, 8: 1-4, p. 969-970.

¹⁵⁹ Albinus, *Handbook*, ch. 15 (not 5), p. 25, lines 15-21. Albinus was a second century Neoplatonist philosopher. The work was ascribed to Alcinous, who is otherwise unknown, in an early manuscript.

¹⁶⁰ In the above discussion it appears that *stoicheion* is used to denote various things: 1) the demons themselves; 2) objects which can control animate objects; 3) things carried out by magical force and incantation. At first sight then the associated words appear to mean as follows:

‘στοιχειοῦν’: to make talismans;

‘στοιχειοῦσθαι’: to be a talisman maker,

‘στοιχειωματικός’: a talisman maker and talismanic, (agreeing with Blum and Greenfield over the interpretation);

‘στοιχειωτικούς λόγους’: words used for creating talismans, or words with talismanic effect.

For a discussion of the precise meanings of these words in a broader context see Greenfield, *Demonology*, pp 191-194, and Blum ‘στοιχεῖον’, 315-325; Lawson, *Folklore*, pp. 255-291, esp. pp. 255-258. (See also Lawson, p. 258 where he states that Allatios uses *στοιχειωματικός* to mean ‘magician’.) However, the question of whether this is the sum total of Allatios’ understanding of the spirit, given his own knowledge of astrology, is dealt with in chapter 8 of the thesis.

¹⁶¹ Georgios Kedrenos was a twelfth-century historian. Little is known about his life.

¹⁶² Romanus Lecapenus, Emperor of Byzantium (919-944)

‘However a certain John, an astronomer, came to Rome and advised him [the emperor] to send someone to amputate the head of the statue which stood above the arch of Xerolophos and looked to the west. Thus Simeon, whose fate was linked to the statue [‘ἐστοιχειώσθαι’] perished. The emperor carried this out, and at the very hour when the head of the statue had been cut off, Simeon died in Bulgaria through a sickness of the heart, which Romanos later discovered through diligent inquiry.’¹⁶³

The same [author in his section on] Theophilios son of Michael relates similar things about the tricks of John the Patriarch;¹⁶⁴ how by removing heads of statues with a single blow he hastened the death of his enemy, [as it were] by this form of decapitation.¹⁶⁵ Nor was it otherwise with [that] tree trunk [which determined] the fate of Meleager.¹⁶⁶ Finally, Apollonios of Tyana¹⁶⁷ produced many similar things through signs and magic effigies, for which reason he was called ‘*stoicheiomaticos*’ by Kedrenos in [his section on] ‘Claudius’:¹⁶⁸

‘When Claudius was emperor, there was a Pythagorean philosopher, Apollonios, a Tyanean by birth, who performed wonders through magical figures [‘στοιχειωματικὸς’]. For, when he arrived in Byzantium, he was asked by the inhabitants to bring about through magic arts, that neither serpents nor scorpions would strike, that midges would not appear, nor horses go wild, and that that they would not savage each other, or any

¹⁶³ Kedrenos, *Opera*, vol. 2, p. 308 lines 1-8.

¹⁶⁴ John VII Grammatikos, Patriarch of Constantinople (837-843), originally an iconodule, became an iconoclast in 814. He tutored Theophilos, son of Emperor Michael II (829-29). Michael had risen from his humble family origins through an army career and was given a high position under Leo V. Later Leo sentenced him to death for treason but Michael escaped imprisonment and assassinated Leo, assuming the throne himself. He restored the worship of icons. He was assassinated himself, and his son Emperor Theophilos (829-42) had these men executed. Theophilos took the opposite position to his father in the dispute over icons, and restored iconoclasm in 831.

¹⁶⁵ Kedrenos, *Opera*, vol. 2, p. 144, line 19, p. 146, line 3.

¹⁶⁶ Allatios refers here to the connection between the fate of Meleager and that of a log burning on the fire when he was seven days old. His mother overheard the Fates discussing this matter and extinguished the log. She kept it carefully for many years until Meleager incurred her wrath. Following his defeat of the Calydonian boar which had been sent to ravage his father’s kingdom, Meleager killed his mother’s brothers in a quarrel over the spoils. To avenge them his mother, Althea, flung the log on the fire and Meleager perished. Cf Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, translated by Mary M. Innes, Penguin Classics, 1955, VIII.513-521, p. 193.

¹⁶⁷ Apollonios was a Neo-pythagorean philosopher born in Tyana (now Kemerhisar near Nigde) in the Cappadocia at the beginning of the Christian period. He was very influential as he was thought to exercise magical powers. His work was thought of as a rival to the Gospels.

¹⁶⁸ The Emperor Claudius (41-54 AD).

other creature. He also controlled [*ἔστοιχείωσεν*] the River Lycos, lest it harmed Byzantium by its floods.¹⁶⁹

‘*Στοιχεῖα*’ [*Stoicheia*] are also called ‘*τελέσματα*’ [*telesmata*] in the *Chronicon Alexandrinum*.¹⁷⁰

(165) ‘*Apollonios of Tyana flourished under this consulate, travelling everywhere. Both in the cities and in the countryside he accomplished telemata, that is supernatural things by magical force and incantation. When he left Rome, he travelled to Byzantium, which fate now decrees is Constantinople. In that place he carried out a variety of telemata, affecting tortoises, the River Lycos which runs through the city and horses and other things.*’¹⁷¹

Hence since Matthaeus Rhiderus¹⁷² did not understand these things, he wrote nonsense to us about raising taxes and duties and dues on oyster fishing from the River Lycos and rearing horses and other things.¹⁷³ These are called by some ‘*ἀποτελεσματικά της γλύψεως*’ [*apotelesmatika tes glupseos*], by others ‘*στοιχειώματα*’ [*stoicheiomata*].

There are similar things which are recounted by the ancients:

-the Palladium at Troy: John of Antioch in his *Archaeologia* writes

¹⁶⁹ Kedrenos, *Opera*, vol 1. p. 346 lines 18-22, p. 347 lines 1-2. Compare p. 431, lines 14-18.

¹⁷⁰ The *Alexandrian Chronicle* was written in the seventh century, and covers the period from the beginning of the world until the time of writing. The majority of the work consists of extracts from Sextus Julius Africanus, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Kosmas Indikopleastes, but it does also provide evidence for the sixth and seventh centuries. In spite of its name, it does not follow the Alexandrian tradition of chronography, and is now usually referred to as the *Chronicon Paschale*. This title was bestowed by Du Cange on account of the particular attention it pays to methods of determining Easter. Du Cange produced an edition of the text in the eighteenth century, but was not the first editor, for an edition was produced in 1615 by Matthew Raderus.

Unfortunately the latest edition of the *Chronicon Paschale* translated with notes and introduction by Michael Whitby and Mary Whitby, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1989, begins with the accession of Diocletian, and so does not contain the above passage.

¹⁷¹ *Chronicon Paschale*, 1832, vol 1: 93, p. 467.

¹⁷² Matthew Rhiderus (1561-1634) was a Jesuit scholar who taught Greek and rhetoric in different colleges. He was particularly interested in classical and patristic texts, and published various editions of patristic and hagiographic texts.

¹⁷³ *Chronicon Alexandrinum*, p. 591: ‘*His consulibus Apollonius Tyaneus floruit, omniaque peragratus passim in urbibus et regionibus vestigalia instituit. Roma profectus et Byzantium venit, hoc est Byzioppidum, dictum a fortuna Constantinopolim, ibique portoriorum ex ostreorum piscatione, lyco flumine, quod mediam secant avitatem, et equorum aliorumque rerum proventu accipiendorum, auctor fuit.*’ See also notes in *Chronicon Paschale*, 1832, pp. 321-322:

‘*ἀποτελεσματικά enim hoc loco non sunt ves(?)tigalia, uti verterat Raderus.*’

*'The Palladium which was at Troy was a tiny animal effigy made by an Asian Philosopher for the protection of the citizens.'*¹⁷⁴

-armed statues, according to Olympiodoros¹⁷⁵ in the *Bibliotheca* of Photios:¹⁷⁶

*'Armed statues ward off the Barbarians from border of the Romans.'*¹⁷⁷

-the skin of Marsyas¹⁷⁸ in Aelianos¹⁷⁹ book 13, chapter 2:

*'If anyone in Calenae sounds the Phrygian harmony with a flute near to the Phrygian skin, the skin moves. If they play it for Apollo, it seems to be still and dumb.'*¹⁸⁰

-the dogs in the palace of the Alcinoi from Homer:

'Truly there were dogs made in gold and silver on both sides of the gate, which Vulcan ingeniously fashioned so that they guarded the house of the

¹⁷⁴ This work is attributed to John of Antioch occurs in the Parisinus Graecus 130 ff 236-9, which is published in C. Müller (ed.), *Fragmenta historicorum graecorum*, 4 vols., Paris: Firmin Didot, 1848-51, vol IV, 540-622. Fragments of different manuscripts are presented here, separated into chapters and placed in order, along side the equivalent chapters from other manuscripts. The extract quoted by Allatios conforms to the Cod. Reg. 1763 Paris Ms, which carries the title *Ἀρχαιολογία*. (Müller, *Fragmenta*, p. 538). For the relevant extract see p. 390.

The work of John of Antioch clearly bears a close relationship to that of John Malalas the Byzantine author (491-ca. 578), but must be attributed to John of Antioch. See Herbert Hunger *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, 2 vols., Munich: Beck, 1978-9, vol. 1, 1978, pp 326-8, and Müller, *Fragmenta*, p. 528. On John Malalas see John Malalas *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, trans. Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys and Roger Scot et al., Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986., p. xxxii, and for the above passage p. 175.

¹⁷⁵ Olympiodorus, of Thebes in Egypt, was a Greek historian, born pre 380, and died after 425. He wrote 22 books of history covering the period 407-425 dedicated to Theodosius II.

¹⁷⁶ Photios I, Patriarch of Constantinople (888-67, 877-86) was elected patriarch despite being a layman. In the past western writers have seen him as the author of schism between the two churches, although in fact the break was of very short duration. His *Bibliotheca* displays his great classical learning, containing extracts of pagan as well as Christian authors. It has been seen as particularly important as it contains many texts now lost.

¹⁷⁷ Photius I, Patriarch of Constantinople, *Bibliothèque Photius*, edited and translated by René Henry, 9 vols., Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1959-1991, vol. 1 60a.23-25 p. 177. I have been unable to find the passage which exactly corresponds to Allatios' quotation. In the passage in the above edition the statues are made of silver rather than being armed.

¹⁷⁸ Marsyas was a Phrygian Satyr who played the flute. He challenged Apollo to a music contest, but lost. Before the contest they had agreed that the winner could treat his rival as he pleased. Apollo flayed Marsyas alive. See Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, Frank Justus Miller trans., 2 vols., London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1984, vol 1, VI: 382-99, p. 314; Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4 vols., trans. A.D. Godley, London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1982, vol. 3, VII: 26, p. 340.

¹⁷⁹ Claudius Aelianus, also known as Aelian of Praeneste, was a third-century author and rhetorician

¹⁸⁰ Aelianus, *Historical Miscellany*, edited and translated by N.G. Wilson, London: Harvard University Press, 1997, XIII:21, p. 430/431.

*great spirited Alcinous, remaining immortal and never growing old in any age.*¹⁸¹

In the year 1145, as John Picardus¹⁸² tells, a toad was found living, enclosed in a hollow stone, in the city wall of Cennoma.¹⁸³ When the toad was killed, toads were found after that within the city walls, when they never had been there before.¹⁸⁴ Iulius Scaliger¹⁸⁵ in *Exercitationum adversus Cardanus*¹⁸⁶ 196, asserts from the books of Egyptian Arabs, that Humethaben Thulon, governor of Egypt under the Arabs, ordered a seal of a lead crocodile which had been found in the foundations of a certain temple to be destroyed by fire. From that time they bewailed indignantly that the regions were infested by crocodiles [and] that it was against this evil that a seal had been made and buried by wise men of old.¹⁸⁷

Several more examples could be added from the *Antiquitatibus Constantinopolitanis*¹⁸⁸ not yet edited, and from other writers, which anyone who pleases can assemble (from them.) These suffice to make our point.

¹⁸¹ This refers to the dogs standing as sentries outside the palace of the king of the Phaeacians. Homer, *Odyssey*, VII:91-94, p. 238, 239.

¹⁸² John Picardus lived as a canon of St Victor in Paris and died c. 1617. His most important work was an edition of the *Works of Saint Bernard*, published in Paris 1610.

¹⁸³ Le Mans.

¹⁸⁴ William of Newburgh (Guillelmi Neuburgensis), *De Rebus Anglicis*, Ioannes Picardus (ed.), Paris apud Carolum Sevestre et Davidem Guillelmum et Iannem Detitipos, 1610, I:28, p. 95-96. See especially Picard's notes on p. 96. Picard claims this information comes from *The Chronicle of Richard, Prior of Hexham*. It is rather to be found in Robert of Torigni's *Chronicle*, where the account matches that of Picard's almost word for word. However it is to be found under the year 1146, rather than 1145. See 'The Chronicle of Robert Torigni in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, (ed.) R. Howlett (4 vols.), vol. 4, (Rolls Series) London: Her Majesties Stationary Office, 1889, p. 153.

¹⁸⁵ Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558), was one of the most knowledgeable and prolific scholars of his age, and was the father of the even more eminent Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609). Amongst other works, he engaged in a philosophical controversy with Girolamo Cardanus.

¹⁸⁶ Geronimus (Girolamo) Cardanus (1510-1576) was a physician and mathematician. He studied at Pavia and Padua and held chairs in maths and medicine at Milan, Pavia and Bologna. He was falsely accused of heresy towards the end of his life, and briefly imprisoned. His most important work was the *Ars Magna* of 1545, which investigated the theory of algebra.

¹⁸⁷ Iulii Caesaris Scaligeri, *Exotericarum Exercitationum libri xv: Ad Hieronymum Cardanus*, Frankfurt, apud Andream Wechelium, 1576, cxcvi.6 p. 637.

¹⁸⁸ George Codinus, *Excerpta de antiquitatibus Constantinopolitanis*, Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae, Immanuel Bekker (ed.), Bonn: E. Weber, 1843, pp. 35; 36; 52; 55; 56; 59; 69; 124. Allatios obviously was not aware of the version edited by Georgius Dousas, Ianus F. Ioannes Meursius in 1607 under the title of *Georgii Codini Selecta de originibus Constantinopolitanis*, Aureliae Allobrogum, excudebat Petrus de la Rouiere.

XXII (166) The *στοιχεῖα* of which we are speaking live in wells [and] are very ready to play tricks, but these are to be distinguished from the larger [*στοιχεῖα* who live in] chamber-like caverns.¹⁸⁹ For there often appears sitting on the well a small Ethiopian man. He molests no one, says nothing, calling women towards him with a nod and a gesture. If they approach, he welcomes them kindly, and they say that he rewards them with many of his own things. If they do not approach, he does not care, nor is unkind towards them. Often, offended by the rejection he also rushes into the well. He tries deceitfully to lure with a kiss and a promise naive and trusting young women, who it is known fall in love [very readily]. And so that you will be the more amazed, there is no shortage of those who say that some, for that reason, seduced by gifts, plight their troth to the little man. Sometimes, as though friends, they are carried down into the wells and into beautiful chambers, most richly and splendidly furnished of all. After a long delay they are refreshed with food and drink, having been carried outside the well, and forever afterwards, whenever they wish, the entrance of the chamber lies open, provided that they are ignorant of the desire for boys.

One tradition is handed down, among others, in all seriousness, about the great well which is in the garden of Kavakos from which only a very few people draw water, perhaps also influenced by certain religious scruples. Thus also in the town of Chios a well abuts the wall of the house of the Mazangi in such a way that it extends out into the road and blocks it so that the traffic does not run freely. [It is situated] shortly after the church of St Eustratios, on the right as you are approaching the point where the three roads meet, on the way from the market place. [It is] not very deep, with a narrow mouth, but supported by vaults and arches on all sides. From [this well] a man riding a very fierce horse comes out, almost always in the middle of the night, and moving more quickly goes up and down on that street in the noisiest way,

¹⁸⁹ These are often described as dragons. See Lawson, *Folklore*, p.280-283; S.D. Imellos, ., 'Εξορκισμοὶ τῆς Γελλοῦς ἐκ Ἀμοργοῦ', *Ἐπετηρὶς τοῦ Λαογραφικοῦ Ἀρχείου* 17 (1964), 40-52.

until he plunges with his horse [back] into the same well. They call the man 'Venia'. This is such common knowledge that that if anyone (167) doubts it, he is said to be mad by those who live close by. And when they make fun of someone as if lacking in intelligence, they ask whether he drank from the well of Venia: 'ἔπιες ἀπὸ παγάδης τοῦ Βένιας', as if drinking that water from the well made them mad. There is also a place in Suda, which separates the castle from the town, where they affirm that the *stoicheia* take on the outward appearance of piglets.

And it is not astonishing that such spirits are spied most frequently in the well, and in the fountains or other places, in stagnant water or mud, for, as Tertullian testifies in his book *De Baptismo*:

*'Unclean spirits lurk in water. Even shady springs and also remote streams know them; [as do] pools of water in bath houses, and domestic water channels, or cisterns and wells which are said to carry off, that is to say, through the force of a harmful spirit. For they call those killed by water and troubled with madness or fear 'tormented' or 'raving' or 'hydrophobic.'*¹⁹⁰

These things explain why they seek out watery places and frequent baths: as Psellos argues longwindedly in his *De Demonibus*,¹⁹¹ and Eunapios¹⁹² in *Porphyrios*¹⁹³ mentions the bath demon. 'For he adds that he pushed and ejected from the certain bathhouse a demon called Causatham by the local people.'¹⁹⁴ See, what the same

¹⁹⁰ Tertullian, *Baptism*, pp. 12-14, English, pp. 13-15. Allatios seems to have truncated the first section of this quotation. In Evan's edition it runs, '*an non et alias sine ullo sacramento immundi spiritus aquis incubant adfectantes illam in primordio divini spiritus gestationem?*', where as Allatios takes only the '*immundi spiritus aquis incubant*'

¹⁹¹ Gautier, '*De Daemonibus*', 105-194.

¹⁹² Eunapius was a pagan writer and historian. He was born in Sardis c. 345/6 A.D. and died c. 414. A.D. Along with the other Neoplatonic figures mentioned below, he was a very important author for renaissance Neoplatonists.

¹⁹³ Porphyry (233-306 A.D.) originally from Tyre, was a Neoplatonic philosopher. The central point of his doctrine was the soul's search for salvation. This was an intellectual philosophy, although it assumed a role for magic for the less well educated.

¹⁹⁴ Wright (ed.), *Sophists*, p. 359. The note from the Loeb translation suggests that the word *Kausatha* may be the Syriac *Kenesetha*, which means both 'cleansing' and 'filth', and suggests that this incident occurred in Syria rather than Rome. In both this example and the one below, we see the pagan 'holy men' exhibiting the same kinds of abilities as their Christian counterparts.

[author] relates, concerning *Eros* and *Anteros* in *Iamblichos*.¹⁹⁵ And concerning other demons ejected from the baths, see Gregory of Nyssa in the *Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi*.¹⁹⁶

But what trifles am I calling to mind? Because if I wish to mention everything which they babble about so convincingly against their better judgement the letter will turn into a volume. Therefore, for that reason, I will make an end to the treatment by narrating what happened in my house. For in that house, as rumour had it, there was an element (i.e. a *stoicheion*) of that kind which usually appeared in the form of a snake. Fifteen days before I arrived on Chios, my mother was in a cupboard, looking for something or other that was in there. As soon as she opened [the door], she saw the snake curled up in the middle, resting. She shut the door and told her neighbours. An old woman, one of those out of whom the Sybilline oracles poured, replied, 'In a short time the master of the house will arrive.' Neither my mother nor the old woman nor anyone else was in a position to know about my journey, since I undertook it unexpectedly, and even had I wished to send back more certain information concerning my departure, I would not have been able to. Now, within the days foretold by the old woman, I arrived home.

Eight months later, woken from sleep in the middle of the night, I felt something or other under the very pillow on which I was resting my head, snoring. Stretching out my hand I seemed to lay hold of a snake, which fled away immediately (168) at my touch. First thing in the morning, I told the neighbours what I had touched in the night. That same old woman turned to me, and smiling said, 'Soon, on this account, you will have to travel from this place to another.' Indeed this prophecy then came

¹⁹⁵ Iamblichus was a Neoplatonic philosopher (c.250-c.325 A.D.) and an opponent of Christianity. Among other works he wrote *On the Mysteries: a Defence of Magic*. This imported superstition and eastern beliefs and changing mysticism into magic. Wright, *Sophists*, p. 369. This passage describes how Iamblichus, persuaded by his students, calls forth the spirits of two neighbouring hot springs, called *Erote* and *Anterote*. The spirits appear as boys and bear the names of the springs.

¹⁹⁶ Gregory of Nyssa (335/340-394) was the younger brother of Basil the Great, by whom he was ordained Bishop of Nyssa in 371. He was extremely well read with respect to classical literature and his writings show the influence of neo-platonic doctrine. Gregory of Nyssa, 'Gregory the Wonderworker', ch 13, pp. 80-81. For the Greek text see Gregory of Nyssa, 'De Vita Gregorii Thaumaturgi', pp. 51-52.

to pass, although I myself neither thought about going away, nor was there any reason why I should prepare myself for a journey. Not twenty days had passed and the question came up and a journey to Rome was decided upon.¹⁹⁷

Others also predict many things from similar occurrences. But enough for me to have indicated popular opinion by one or two examples.

XXIII (168) For I shall not conceal the following. Those who wish to be more observant of sacred things, while they are inquiring concerning the life of anybody who has gone abroad and it is unknown whether he is dead or alive, are accustomed to murmur I don't know what prayers. Then they kindle a torch or a lamp which they place under the open sky, in the air and wind even in very bad weather. Others also hang holy images in front of it. If the light is extinguished before the torch or oil is finished, they conclude, not by mere conjecture but follow from solid argument, that he is done for and he now lies amongst the dead because his life has been snuffed out. If the light remains unextinguished, even in very savage weather, things are going well for him and he is alive. They own that they also know from the colour of the light both the type of sickness and by which death he may end his life, and how he fares during that period: whether he is safe or lives in peril.

Many years ago when I was in Venice, in St Mark's Square, and I was discussing my problems with others, I received an image of the noble Virgin from an intelligent and wise man who was present in that same square. She was depicted with so great a veneration that it possessed among many other qualities the following quite extraordinary [one]: if anyone, concerned about the life of another, whoever he may be, lit a candle before her, it is discovered without question from the light of that candle whether he is still among the living. Indeed, if he lives, whatever kind of tempest rages, that light is not extinguished. If his life has departed, the light is

¹⁹⁷ This refers to his return to Rome with the Bishop of Chios, Bishop Marco Giustiniani Massone, to face the Rota. For a discussion of this see the introduction to the thesis.

extinguished even without a breath of wind, with the air very still and without a breeze. Other trustworthy men confirm what that man said by their testimony.

In addition it is possible to return to the same [subject] which Pachymeres relates in his *Historia*, book 8, chapter 14:

*'On the fourteenth day of the month of October Athanasios who had been promoted moved towards the holy church on foot. Shortly afterwards he was ordained and the usual sign also occurred. The lamps, which provided any of the clergy with proof the rejection of the patriarch, were hanging near the patriarchal throne from a circular frame, and there was not even a breath of wind. When the hymns were sung they flickered, and anyone who saw them had proof of the ejection of the current patriarch. And this occurred with Arsenios, Germanos, Joseph, John and Gregory. It happened that these lamps also flickered then and the many people who saw it examined the phenomenon.'*¹⁹⁸

And Pachymeres relates in his *Historia*, book 9, final chapter, concerning Simonis, the daughter of Andronikos Paleologos, the elder.

(169) *'The emperor was grieving over the loss of his daughters before they were born because it had happened to him on two or three occasions. When this child was [about to be] born, and, with great fear lest similar things happened to him, a woman, well-known for her experience of these things and her seriousness of manner, gave him advice over and above the customs of the common people concerning the safe delivery of his child. This was her advice: to light candles of equal weight and height, appropriate to each in front of individual icons of the twelve worthy apostles. Then they were to sing concerning the new born, pouring out prayers and continuing them until the candles were consumed by fire. The name given to the new born should be taken from the Apostle whose light survives **(170)** when the others have been consumed. From this she would obtain safety and health. At the emperor's orders, everything was carried out, and amongst the others Simon's candle continued to burn when the others had been extinguished. Thus displaying the name of that apostle for her own protection.'*¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Pachymeres, *De Michaele*, vol.2, 2:15 (not 14), p. 146.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 3:32, p. 276-277.

XXIV (170) I shall add a pious custom of the same Greeks. On the sacred day of Epiphany, when Christ our Lord was baptised with water by John in the Jordan, once all the people are assembled, the priests with candles, which they showed to everyone, a ritual of solemn supplication and the rest of the ceremonial, blessed the water with that benediction which they call *mega agiasma*. Finally that water is left to be taken away by everyone. Hurrying, they draw it off, some with larger bottles, some with smaller, and carried it back home. After a zealous sprinkling through the house they stored it in wine jars. When these are full to capacity and can take no more, as much wine is drawn from the tap as water went into the cask. It is proved by the testimony of all that the wine from the jars is conserved after the wine is drawn off if it is distributed among the poor or charitable foundations. If greed turns it to personal use, not long after it turns to vinegar. Therefore, through the whole city, multitudes of jars are conveyed this way and that to the great joy of all the people, to the needy and beneficent institutions and also even to sober men.

This is related to me by many who had themselves seen it. They assert it earnestly, affirming it, even swearing to it, that on the mountain of very praiseworthy Athos, distinguished by thirty or more very noble monasteries, on that same day as in the rest of Greece, waters from rivers or wells, as will suit the occasion, are blessed by those venerable fathers. But the following is the most amazing of all. The monastery of the Georgians was built with great skill by the Georgian Fathers, John, George and the others, at the foot of a mountain by the sea in honour of the Mother of God at the time when the heresy of the iconoclasts raged against the sacred images.²⁰⁰ That image of the Mother of God was thrown into the sea by pious men so that she would escape from the flames and the works of evil men. Not long after, she showed herself to the inhabitants of the region, standing up in the water and seeking land. Many rushed to her and in rowing boats and other craft set a course for the image. But she retreated from the vicinity and set off for the deep. All the efforts of those approaching came to nothing. **(171)** Therefore, amazed, they referred the matter to the bishops and the rest of the holy men. Immediately these men saw it,

²⁰⁰ John the Iberian and his son Euthymius were the first Georgians to arrive on Athos and founded the monastery of Iveron along with the General John Tornikos.

they donned their holy apparel, lit lamps and not only with censings but also with canticles - when they caught sight of the image in the same place as they had done before for the first time, they also joined the chase, but she made a mockery of their best efforts, fleeing, very often with them in pursuit. They resorted to prayers - and with tears and signs they beseeched God, that he should show them what should be done in this case. God indicated to the bishops that the image could not be held, unless the Georgians, of whom we have spoken, took part in a solemn ritual. They assembled. When the image had come to rest, it was seized and entrusted to their hands. Therefore the Georgians settled in the same place and afterwards gave the name to the monastery building.²⁰¹

There is a sandy shore, which belongs to that monastery stretching for 350 yards. On the celebration of the light, that is Epiphany, the fathers of the monastery purified the waters on the shore, with a great multitude of people rushing in from all parts of the surrounding area. First Christ, attached to the cross which is held in the abbot's hands, is dipped in the sweet water contained in basins or another vessel. Then, finally, the cross, fixed to the end of a longer pole is dipped in the sea itself. With arms extended, stretching out as far as possible, the cross is submerged in the lower, raging abyss of the sea. A hymn is sung in a clear voice:

*'In Jordan when you were baptised, Oh Lord, the worship of the Trinity is revealed: for the voice of the Father, bears witness calling you his beloved son, and the spirit in the form of a dove, confirmed the certainty of his words. To you, Christ the Lord, who revealed yourself, and who enlightens the world, glory.'*²⁰²

²⁰¹ This is the account of the arrival of the famous Portaitissa icon of the Iveron monastery. It is not included in F. W. Hasluck, *Athos and its Monasteries*: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd., London, 1924. However, it can be found in A. Riley, *Athos or the Mountain of the Monks*, London: Longman, Green, 1887, pp. 139-140. Riley writes that the image could only be captured by a pious hermit called Gabriel. It was seized on Easter Tuesday, and brought in procession to Gabriel's monastery, and placed near the portal, so that everyone entering or leaving could pay their respects. It is from this that it took its name Portaitissa. Later a church was built for it by a Georgian called Achothan, Prince of Moukhran. Riley takes this from Marie Francis Brosset, *Histoire de la Géorgie depuis l'antiquité jusqu'au XIX^e*, St Petersburg, 1849-58. Unfortunately I have not been able to see this work.

²⁰² Goar, *Euchologion*, p. 372; Hapgood, *Service Book*, p. 196.

The hymn is repeated three times with the melody. While it is sung those salty waters become sweet to the taste, so that the whole shore is made pleasant to drink. Once the third hymn is finished, the waters return to their former salty state. They flock to the sea in crowds, the more fastidious with ladles, and experience this to be so. Some drinking water in another way, proclaim the fact to those hesitating, and hold up the waters to be tasted. They are amazed at the sudden and varied transformation of the water and they celebrate Christ's baptism every year with such a great miracle.

They declare that the water blessed on the day of that benediction neither corrupts nor becomes stale. They claim that they have proved this by experience and those who deny it are of unsound mind. If they observe that it turns out otherwise they prophesy that it threatens bad things and misfortune for them.

They relate the same concerning the consecrated bread which they claim suffers no corruption and putrefaction. Therefore when once it happened to be corrupted, Pachymeres relates, not without tears, in his *Historia*, book 7, chapter 28, that it is a sign of a portent and a harbinger of bad things to come.

(173) *'What had happened, terrible to see and hear, added certainty to these things which had happened at this time. Some adduced one solution, others another. However, no one broached the matter of his judgement, although tired out through much investigation. "For who knows the mind of the Lord?", Job said, "Who attains the limit of his wisdom?" Although we follow such things until, it is agreed, to the level of madness, Pindar, however, said in similar matters we should be afraid to speak or think. Since I have taken on the task of narrating what happened, if anything out of the ordinary occurs it is not right that it escapes attention: for truth strengthens the mind, and I shall not deserve anything of the kind [of censure] from future audiences that I would inflict on myself for passing over it in silence.²⁰³ Therefore that exceptional event is also narrated along with other things as containing within itself a sign of divine providence. It is not known what it signifies, whether in the past or the future. The Sunday known as Cheese Eating*

²⁰³ I.e. I will not deserve the same kind of censure from future audiences for including it, as I would from myself for omitting it.

Day was at hand.²⁰⁴ This custom called the priest to perform the liturgy in the church. He was to fill the sacred caskets with the pre-sanctified elements as much as he was able, according to the number prescribed by the liturgy. When the offering of the holy sacrament had been performed, while the casket was being brought back in order to replace the holy bread, suddenly the pre-sanctified elements were found within it. Whoever seeing it would assert reasonably that it was that one from the three, to be offered on Great and Holy Wednesday. When it happened, as had been said, that the holy sacrifice was not completed, on account of the absolution performed too slowly by the clergy, whoever they were, [the offering] was not used in that place. Lying there, it was so entirely corrupt and rotting that it did not have the appearance of bread. So far was it from being bread, that it did not appear to be bread of any kind. Indeed, it seemed to be certain black crumbs of treacle or some other [substance] (174) of similar composition.

As soon as he had seen it, fear entered the priest and he did not know what he should do since it was it could not be united with more recent bits for consumption. It was judged a terrible thing, not as much suffered as seen, since there was no remedy available. Therefore, it was placed for all to see, and they searched for what must be done with as many devotions as possible. But because it was, and was seen and was befitting, He allowed the change to be great. Now the priest, hesitating, turned his mind from eating it. But it could not be brought to God in any other way, nor could he communicate the sacraments. It divided those watching, who did not know what he should do, with fear on one side and uselessness on the other. But fear concentrated their minds, producing one and the same advice that the priest, whatever he was about to suffer, should consume what was seen.

However, because he did not in any way wish to taste the said item with the edge of his lips, hesitating, [then] made more bold, he brought a quick remedy. Indeed, [it was] greatly beneath his dignity but truly necessary above all other things which anyone ever thought of. Similarly, it is true that these sacred and precious things are and always were a care to God. Then truly the elements were thrown in and received in a holy way in that place consecrated from antiquity for similar cases, - from which [act the place] is called a sacred furnace.²⁰⁵

Indeed, Gretser book 2 chapter X of *De Benedictionibus* teaches with a few examples that the blessed water, especially the baptismal water, is also perceived to remain

²⁰⁴ Cheese eating Sunday is the last Sunday before Lent.

²⁰⁵ Pachymeres, *De Michaelē*, vol. 2, 1:28, p. 77-78.

uncorrupted among the Latins.²⁰⁶ Our friend Bertholdus Nihusius²⁰⁷ near Magdeburg in the nunnery of Haldenslebens, of which he said he had once been abbot, confirms that Baptismal water was preserved fresh in the font of the church for all to see. The same thing always happened in recent times until the 1600s, or until the water was polluted by the Lutheran steward who was thrust on it by the nuns around 1620. Nihusius himself also adds [from a man] well known to him and to us, called the great Theologian, that in Belgium some of the participants who were gravely ill, after they were given that water with which the priest finally washed the chalice at the end of mass, suddenly got better.²⁰⁸ This relates to these things which we have discussed above in number VI. But this is enough.²⁰⁹

XXV (174) So as not to digress further from these same days: on the first day of January, which is the start of the civilian year according to the Greeks, when the memory of Basil the Great is celebrated, the father, or, when this is lacking, the mother, just at day break, before anyone [else] leaves the house, left himself, taking a plaited basket which had been prepared in which are laid various kinds of produce and sweet fruit and also very white breads, made with the greatest care. Returning home and murmuring fortunate things for the house and inhabitants, going around the whole house he sprinkled it abundantly and effusively. They hold, I whisper this, that with the profusion of edible things throughout this year, all fortunate things will happen for that house. When I saw it myself, I said not without a smile, that it would be better if they ate the remains which were thrown around in vain.

²⁰⁶ Gretser, *de benedictionibus*, pp. 101-105, esp. pp. 103-105.

²⁰⁷ Bertoldus Nihusius was a friend of Allatios and edited many of Allatios works including this one: the *De opin.* and the *Summikta*. Not only did he edit *De ecclesiae*, but it was written on his suggestion. (See Allatios, *De ecclesiae*, p. xxxi).

²⁰⁸ The discussion to which he refers comes from Bertoldus Nihusius, *Apologeticus pro arte nova contra andabatam Helmstetensem*, Coloniae Agrippinae, apud Cornelium ab Egmond, 1610, ch. 22, pp. 158-9.

²⁰⁹ The corrections at the end of the work require this final sentence to be deleted.

XXVI (175) Thirty years ago, we sailed from Chios to Messina. We rounded Cape Malea with a fair wind and a sea which had been calm for a very long time. Suddenly a savage storm arose and we began to be thrown around. It grew steadily worse, whipped up by the power of the wind and we abandoned any hope of safety. Therefore we waited for a watery death, drowned together in the whirlpool of the waves. While I was feeling sorry for myself, blaming myself for sailing when I could have rested at home, I saw the navigator on the rigging of the ship making some sign or other with his hand. He was held to be most skilled and expert in maritime matters. I approached. I asked what he was doing. The old man, although very much fearing the worst replied with a cheerful face. 'I weakened the force of the deadly waves both by the sign of the cross and by other prayers with incantation.' I asked whether he knew the deadly waves amongst so many attacking [the ship]. 'Yes', he said. 'However many times the ship is tossed by numerous waves, none will sink it except the ninth wave.' And when the ship was struck more violently by a wave and turned in another direction it remained under water covered by the sea, and did not emerge as quickly as from the other waves. 'This', he said, 'is the ninth. Start counting!', and he began counting the number out loud. It was truly amazing. He counted nine and with that wave, just as with a powerful and dangerous machine, the ship rocked so that it clearly threatened destruction. He seemed to soften the blow by whispering silently to the wave and making the sign of the cross so that he averted the calamity. I do not know the words he spoke, for I did not think it worthwhile to inquire the secrets of the man. I counted almost 1,000 waves before the storm died down and I always experienced the saying of the old man to be true, for the ship was always at risk from the inauspicious ninth wave.

XXVII (175) If a hen crows, the Greeks assert that it heralds a dire omen for them and they avert it thus. The paterfamilias, or whoever is the head of the household, places the hen which **(176)** he has seized on the threshold. Then, after certain things have been whispered, he cuts off the head with a double-edged axe or sword, which he had prepared earlier. They affirm that they have taken care of that impending

misfortune if he entirely severs the neck with one blow. If he does not accomplish this with a single stroke but the axe is left sticking in the body or in some other of its parts, the calamity has not been averted, but worse is expected: so much force is believed to reside in the neck of the crowing hen.

XXVIII (176) [There is] also a tradition deeply engraved on the minds of the citizens of Chios, concerning that resin which they call mastic. Before the martyrdom of Saint Isidore it took a fluid and a liquid form. Afterwards, through the blood of such a holy martyr who was dragged through those places and torn apart, it turned into a solid body. I have also read that (tradition) handed down in writing by Nicholas Pepagomenos in his oration in praise of St Isidore:

*'A rumour of a certain kind also continued to circulate down to our time, concerning the fluid flowing from the mastic trees, which finally congealed into a solid (about which you should know very well that the supply is to be found among the Chiots alone, but is greatly in use among other peoples, and is also employed against disease, either alone or mixed with other substances). Before it did not congeal and, except for a little [residue], was washed away with the rainwater and lost. The triumph of this martyr, his splendid battle against his enemies, his strong mind which submitted to none, and his powers of endurance turned [the resin] almost to (the substance) of stone, as we see today. And likewise that wealth stands before us, so that now no one, wherever he lives on the earth, is deprived of its benefit.'*²¹⁰

XXIX (176) It is now time to turn our attention to insects and caterpillars [who] eat away the foliage, and especially those who are called by the Greeks *'campae'*²¹¹

²¹⁰ Leo Allatios (ed. and trans.), *'Nicolai Pepagomeni Laudatio in S. Isidorum Martyrem.'* I have been unable to gain access to this book. It was intended to include it in the expanded version of the *'Summikton sive Opusculorum Graecorum, et Latinorum Vetustiorum ac Recentiorum, libri X'*, Romae, apud Successorem Mascardi, 1668, VI, no 5. Only the contents of the proposed book appeared under this title, and the work was never published in full. The list of contents is also reproduced in Legrand, *Bibliographie*, vol 2, 1894, p.p. 220-237.

²¹¹ *'κάμπη'* is a caterpillar

because they curl themselves into an arc;²¹² by the Latins ‘*eruca*’ because they gnaw away.²¹³ Various ways are known of driving them away from the crop of vegetables. Many, having no confidence in nature, (177) resort to other worthless things. It was related to me that a very effective remedy is if they are accused by name in the court before the judges, by a public herald or in a written document as in a lawsuit. Thus they disappear instantly. If they continue to inflict harm, they are repeatedly cited before the court. When they persist, a sentence is pronounced on the stubborn creatures. There are even those who examine the witnesses on the damage and injury already suffered. They say that it is amazing that the caterpillars who can tolerate anything do not hold out against the judgement, but at that time suddenly scatter themselves and disappear lest they are caught and suffer punishment. For anyone puts to death those he has seized, and gathers them suspended from a pitch-fork in the garden, when he sees that they stubbornly spurn the powers of judges.²¹⁴ Then the rest, in fear of punishment, retreat elsewhere. If you laugh, the sworn witnesses will be called to testify on this subject.

These matters are similar to what can be read in the Greek Georgian writers, book 12 chapter 8:

*‘Certain men, when there are many caterpillars, lead a menstruating woman without shoes into a garden, with hair untied, wearing a single shift and beyond that nothing at all, neither veiled with any apron, nor with her head covered in any way. For this woman, with such an appearance and dress, goes round the garden three times and when she has gone out through the middle, the caterpillars immediately disappear.’*²¹⁵

Michael Psellos considered another way of destroying those creatures.

²¹² Allatios here correctly sees the origins of ‘*κάμπη*’ (caterpillar) in the verb ‘*κάμπω*’, to bend, curve, wind.

²¹³ Allatios’ derives ‘*eruca*’ (caterpillar) from ‘*erodo*’, to gnaw off, gnaw away, consume, eat away. He appears to follow Isidore’s etymology. See Isidore XII.5.9. No origin is given for ‘*eruca*’ in Lewis and Short’s *Latin Dictionary*.

²¹⁴ *Furca* or fork also has the meaning of ‘a fork shaped gallows’.

²¹⁵ I have been unable to locate this extract.

(178) 'However, there are two wise men, Iulianus Chaldaeus and Apuleius Aser,²¹⁶ who had learned the secrets of nature through observation. The former, truly was more concise on this matter, the latter more divine and with greater spirituality, just as those who venerated him and held him in admiration say. Thus, this man, when he had prepared his amulet by chanting words to the materials themselves, restrained the attack of wild beasts but there were many things that he was not able to drive back. Iulianus, however, without incantations and amulets, could deal with anything. I myself neither wish you to wipe out the infestation of caterpillars with an amulet, nor would I wish for an action to succeed spontaneously. It clearly seems to me that what is disseminated by these men is nothing but fables and fiction.

The Philosopher Proclus did not despise them but he carried them out with praise as a divine invention, (I do not yet know why he did it) or if it is more pleasing, as a fraudulent deception. I myself know, however, opposing properties²¹⁷ which are endowed with virtue and power against animal damage and, equally, the poison most effective against locusts and rust and of others which lay waste to the vines and devour the corn. I will explain the thing in brief.

You have heard perhaps of the hydra, a celestial sign. Let it not escape your notice when it is rising. When you see its light, [you should] immediately hunt the viper. It is an animal and not difficult to hunt, well known to everyone by its markings. Put it on its back and cut it from chin to tail. Then, hanging it from a fine thread, secretly fortify [the place], as it were, tracing something like a circle in the fields. The rust in the plants hence deprived of strength, the locust will not land on them, nor will the caterpillar be laid in the flowers. I say, without any joking, that you are much more distinguished than Alexander both in prudence and in judgement, because he had Aristotle as a teacher while you have Psellos.'

Others employed a better method. They implored divine help, not without effect, with the prayers set down in the *Euchologion*. They told me, and even swore an oath, (179) that the Basilian monks of Grottaferrata in the province of Tusculanum

²¹⁶ Iulianus Chaldaeus was reputedly the author of the *Chaldean Oracles*, an important work for Neoplatonists which cited the various oracles and explained the doctrines behind them. Psellos wrote a commentary on this work. Apuleius Aser, (c.125 AD) was a writer and orator. His work often contained magical elements.

²¹⁷ This approach can also be seen in the Galenic theory of opposites, which was frequently resorted to in western medicine of the early modern period.

and other places drive off similar insects with the prayer of St Tryphon.²¹⁸ When they had fasted, after mass, they sprinkled [the insects] with water which they had blessed on the day of Epiphany and preserved throughout the whole year. When they had walked round the field they went out into the countryside. They established themselves in mountainous and uncultivated places or even in marshy places, for if they go into the garden they achieve nothing. It is amazing to relate. After a short time those little creatures appear on command by the same route that the priests had taken. Crawling more quickly, they came to that place in swarms and when they had consumed whatever they found suitable to eat, finally they disappeared. If it is a swamp or water, they are drowned when they are inevitably submerged.

XXX (179) I shall finish speaking if I draw attention to what others have handed down in writing concerning the holy fire of Jerusalem. However, it happens (as we wander off on a tangent), that on the day of the Passion of the Lord, when all the lights of Jerusalem have been put out in the tomb of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Most Holy Resurrection, these lights, which had been extinguished, are rekindled by a divine spark. It occurs annually and still persisted at the time of Urban II. Urban himself confirmed it at the Council of Claremont, where he exhorted the western Christians to recover the holy land, [as stated in] William of Malmesbury,²¹⁹ *De Rebus Anglicis*, book 4, chapter 2.²²⁰ Urspergensis relates in his writing, on the basis of the account of Hermann the priest, that this same phenomenon was shown to the people of God during the Easter Vigil in the year 1101. A certain Bartholomew Polycronias, living in Jerusalem in the year 1168²²¹

²¹⁸ 'Exorcism of St Tryphon', in Eastern Orthodox Church, *Εὐχολόγιον τὸ Μέγα*, pp. 500-503.

²¹⁹ William of Malmesbury (1090-1143), was the preceptor and librarian of Malmesbury, where he lived as a Benedictine monk. He is best known for his historical works, the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, and the *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*.

²²⁰ *Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, edited and translated by R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998-1999. William's account of Urban's speech at Claremont does not in fact refer to the holy fire at Easter, only to 'the Lord's Sepulchre, that supreme monument of our faith'. ('*Dominicum monumentum, unicum fidei pignus*'), vol 1, iv.347.4, p. 600 (Latin), p. 601 (English). The Holy fire is mentioned in the narrative at iv.367.3, p. 642, 643; iv.379 passim, p. 674, 676 and 675-677.

²²¹ 1068, the date given by Allatius, appears to be incorrect from what follows. 1168 makes much better sense of the passage.

[and] who copied the manuscript of the Gospels which is listed in the Barberini Library under number 13, said that he had caught sight of the light in that very year.²²²

'You who may read this, pray for me, humble Bartholomew from Britziario, so that I may partake in the inheritance of celestial justice. Amen. God willing, (180) I went twice to Jerusalem on pilgrimage: the first in the year 1158, the second in 1168 when I bought the present book. Although unworthy, I saw the holy light on Great Saturday and it descends in the ninth hour to the Holy Sepulchre of Christ'

And among my bits of paper I noted down from another old manuscript:

'The processional hymn is performed in the following way. When, as is customary, the holy church of Jerusalem, of the holy resurrection, every Great Saturday receives a new and celestial light, which burns in the lamps above the vivifying and divine sepulchre, with I don't know which patriarch waiting for it, then church falls silent. No one lights a fire, but the whole city waited so that they could benefit from it. Suddenly, not only the sepulchre, but also the whole church of the holy resurrection was lit up and so the patriarch intoned this hymn as a thanksgiving. "Oh joyful light of holy glory of the immortal heavenly father, of the holy and blessed Jesus Christ, who came at the setting of the sun, when we see the evening light. We praise the Father, Son and Holy Spirit of God. You are worthy to be praised for all time with joyful voices, oh son of God, who laid down your life: thus the world glorifies you. "'

Gretser relates many things concerning this in *De Cruce* volume 3 book 2 chapter 11.²²³ We learn from John Kantekuzenos in his *Apologia contra Mahumetanorum III* that [the miracle] continued after the city of Jerusalem returned to the power of the Muslims and the Christians were expelled when they tried to convert Muslims to the

²²² I have been unable to identify this manuscript. No. 13 of the old system does not appear in V. Capocci, *Codices Barberiniani Graeci I*, Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1958. The phrasing of the quotation suggests that it comes from a note written on another work.

²²³ Jacob Gretser, *De Cruce Christi, tomus primus recognitus (tomus secundus, tomus tertius)*, 3 vols., Ingolstadij, ex typographia Adami Sartorii, 1605, vol 3, III:11 : 'Memorabilia quae Virtute Crucis in regno Hierosolymitano gesta post obitum Ducis Godefridi, usque ad mortem Baldvini, primi coronati Regis', pp. 44-51. On the Holy Fire see esp. pp. 47-49.

Christian faith through this yearly miracle of the fire, which was set alight by divine means.²²⁴

Anonymous *De Locis Heirosolymitanis*:

*'The holy light came down on the great and holy Saturday, at the hour of Vespers. It was near the tomb of Christ and immediately lit its lamps.'*²²⁵

Petrus Arcudius,²²⁶ (181) however, in book 2, chapter 9 of 'De Confirmatione' relates that the Greeks boast beyond measure that they have miraculously received the holy fire on the eve of Easter, through which the remaining lamps in the sepulchre of the Lord were lit while they carry out the ceremonies of the resurrection. But he says that he found it to be false from truly distinguished men and those most worthy of trust who illuminate those places because of their piety.²²⁷

XXXI (181) However, some Greeks assert from this same light, as also from the corpses of the dead which the earth casts out every year during this period, that the time for celebration of Easter is not that reckoned by the calculation of the Gregorian calendar but that which the fathers established at the Nicene Synod. [To quote] Christophoros Angelos in chapter 42 of *De Vita et Moribus Recentiorum Graecorum*:

'The third reason is that near the Nile and the city of Cairo a great sign was seen when the earth threw up bodies of dead men. However, the region began to expel bodies of the dead from the festival of Great

²²⁴ John Kantekuzenos, 'Contra Mahometem: Apologia III', in J.P. Migne (ed.), *Patrologia Cursus Completus: Series Graeca*, Paris: Garnier, vol. 154, 1866, cols. 517-520.

²²⁵ *De Locis Heirosolymitanis Graece et Latine*. This work is contained in Leo Allatios, *Summika, sive Opusculorum, Graecorum et Latinorum, vetustiorum ac recentiorum, libri duo*, Coloniae Agrippinae apud Iodocum Kalcovium, 1653, vol. 1, pp. 79-102. The section to which Allatios refers comes from ch 1, p. 82.

²²⁶ Petrus Arcudius (ca. 1563 - 1633) was an acquaintance of Allatios, who mentions him in his *De ecclesiae*, col. 999. Born in Corfu, he was a compatriot of Allatios, and like him left Greece to attend the Greek School at Rome, enrolling in 1578. He converted to Catholicism in 1580 and became a priest at some point between 1588 and 1591. He subsequently conducted missions in Russia and Poland. On his return to Rome, sometime between 1609 and 1616, he was invited into the household of Cardinal Scipio Borghese as his personal theologian. He also concerned himself with the administration of the Greek College, which had gone through a troubled period, and was now in the hands of the Dominicans. He and fellow Jesuit alumni managed to obtain from Gregory XV the return of the college to the Jesuits. He died in 1633, and was buried in the church of St Athanasius, the church of the Greek College. For details of Arcudius' life see Legrand, *Bibliographie*, vol. 3, 1895, p.p. 209-254. See also the entry under his name in Allatios, *Apes urbanae*, pp. 306-308.

²²⁷ Arcudius, *De concordia: de Confirmatione*: 9, p. 81.

Thursday, that is, from the day on which Christ our Lord instituted the last supper, and each day threw up dead bodies. [This continued] right up to the day of Ascension; that is, until the day on which Christ rose to heaven, forty days after Easter. Forty days after Easter it ceases. Turks and Greeks who travel to that place assert that this phenomenon must be admired. Those who go on pilgrimage to the Sepulchre of Christ rush from Jerusalem to those places to witness the miracle - as we have heard from the same. However, the event occurs in accordance with the ancient calculation of Easter and never in accordance with the more recent date. Once, twenty years ago, the Greeks tried to celebrate Easter in accordance with the new calculation, but the corpses of the dead failed to emerge in accordance with it.

Likewise, to follow another line of reasoning, the holy fire does not descend in accordance with the new computation as it used to every year over the tomb of Christ, in accordance with the ancient calculation for Easter.²²⁸ Therefore Greeks, for this reason, persist in the older calculation, and the light comes in accordance with the old calculation, and similarly the earth throws up the corpses of the dead, as it used to each year. Then the Greeks celebrate Easter, saying: "Behold, God shows us the true Easter, and we do not bother about human wisdom."²²⁹

But now that is enough of trifles, by which we have mixed some serious things on the way.

²²⁸ Allatios omits here in the Greek, 'τότε οἱ Ἕλληνες παριέμειναν, ἕως τοῦ παλαιοῦ ἀριθμοῦ τοῦ πάσχα. Κατά δὲ τὸν παλαιὸν ἀριθμὸν τοῦ πάσχα...' and continues in Allatios text, 'ἦλθε καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Φῶς.' He does however include it in his Latin translation: 'Quare Graeci in veteris calculi ratione perstiterunt et secundum veterem Paschatis calculum venit lumen sanctum...'. See Allatios, *De opin.*, p. 181, line 34 (Greek), p. 182 lines 16-18. Compare Angelos, *De statu*, p. 818.

²²⁹ Angelos, *De statu*, pp. 524 (Greek).

Appendix 2

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